

THE
HISTORY
AND
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF
SANTILLANE.
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME IV.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for and by WILLISON & DARLING.

MDCCLXXI.



CHA
V
D
M
ta
CHA
ri
fo
se
CHA
V
se
th
CHA
Lo
th
Se
CHA
be
pic
CHA
a
fri
CHA
ri
the
CHA
cha
CHA
An
ted
wi
CHA
an
bif
V

THE CONTENTS.

BOOK X.

- CHAP. I. *Gil Blas sets out for Asturias; he passes by Valladolid, where he goes to visit his old master Dr. Sangrado; he meets by chance Signior Manuel Ordonez, administrator of the hospital* Page 1
- CHAP. II. *Gil Blas pursues his journey, and arrives happily at Oviedo. In what condition he found his parents. His father dies; the consequence of his death* 12
- CHAP. III. *Gil Blas sets out for the kingdom of Valencia, and arrives at last at Lirias. A description of his seat; how he was received there, and what people he there met with* 23
- CHAP. IV. *He sets out for Valencia, to see the Lords of Leyva; of the discourse he had with them, and the good reception he met with from Seraphina* 31
- CHAP. V. *Gil Blas goes to the playhouse, where he sees a new tragedy. The success of that piece. The genius of the people of Valencia* 37
- CHAP. VI. *Gil Blas, in walking the streets, meets a friar, whom he fancies he knows; who this friar was* 41
- CHAP. VII. *Gil Blas returns to his castle at Lirias; the agreeable news Scipio tells him, and the reformation they made in the family* 50
- CHAP. VIII. *Of the loves of Gil Blas and the charming Antonia* 55
- CHAP. IX. *The nuptials of Gil Blas and the lovely Antonia; after what manner they were celebrated; what company were present at them, and with what rejoicings they were attended* 65
- CHAP. X. *The sequel of the marriage of Gil Blas and the beauteous Antonia. The beginning of the history of Scipio* 70

CHAP. XI. *The sequel of the history of Scipio* 102

CHAP. XII. *The conclusion of the life of Scipio* 118

BOOK XI.

CHAP. I. *Of the greatest happiness that ever befell Gil Blas, and of the melancholy accident that put a stop to it. Of the changes that happened at court, which made Santillane return thither* 141

CHAP. II. *Gil Blas arrives at Madrid, and appears at court, where the King knows him, and recommends him to his first minister: the success of his recommendation* 147

CHAP. III. *What hindered Gil Blas from putting in practice the resolution he had taken of leaving the court; and of the important service done him by Joseph Navarro* 154

CHAP. IV. *Gil Blas gains the love of the Count d'Olivarez* 157

CHAP. V. *Of the secret conference Gil Blas had with Navarro, and of the first business in which the Count d'Olivarez employed the former* 160

CHAP. VI. *What use Gil Blas made of his three hundred pistoles, and on what business he sent Scipio. The success of the memorial mentioned in the foregoing chapter* 167

CHAP. VII. *By what chance, in what place, and in what condition Gil Blas met again his friend Fabricio, and the conversation they had together* 172

CHAP. VIII. *Gil Blas grows daily dearer and dearer to his master: Scipio returns to Madrid; what account he gave of his journey to Santillane* 177

CHAP. IX. *How, and to whom the Count-Duke married his only daughter; the bitter fruits this marriage produced* 181

CHAP. X. *Gil Blas meets the poet Nunez by chance,*

181

C O N T E N T S.

- who informs him, that he has writ a tragedy, which is soon to be acted at the Prince's theatre. The ill success of this piece; and the astonishing good fortune with which it was followed* 185
- CHAP. XI. *Santillane procures an employment for Scipio, who sets out for New Spain* 190
- CHAP. XII. *Don Alphonso de Leyva comes to Madrid; the reason of his journey; the affliction it caused Gil Blas, and the joy with which it was followed* 193
- CHAP. XIII. *Gil Blas meets Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Don Andrea de Tordefillas, in the King's apartment; whither they all went; the conclusion of the story of Don Gaston and Donna Helena de Galisteo; what service Santillane did Tordefillas* 198
- CHAP. XIV. *Santillane goes to see the poet Nunez; what persons he found there, and what conversation passed between them* 208

B O O K XII.

- CHAP. I. *Gil Blas is sent by the minister to Toledo; the motive and success of his journey* 211
- CHAP. II. *Santillane gives an account of his commission to the minister, who charges him to send for Lucretia to Madrid: the arrival of that actress, and her first appearance upon the King's theatre* 223
- CHAP. III. *Lucretia makes a great noise at court, and plays before the King, who falls in love with her; the consequence of that love* 226
- CHAP. IV. *Of the new employment the minister gave Santillane* 233
- CHAP. V. *The son of the Genoese is acknowledged by an authentic act, and named Don Henry-Philip de Guzman; Santillane forms this young nobleman's*

- nobleman's household, and provides him all sorts of masters* 237
- CHAP. VI. *Scipio returns from New Spain; Gil Blas places him with Don Henry. The studies of that young nobleman: the honours that were shewn him; and to what lady the Count-Duke married him: how Gil Blas was made a gentleman against his will* 240
- CHAP. VII. *Gil Blas again meets Fabricio by chance; the last conversation they had together; and the important intelligence Nunez gave Santillane* 244
- CHAP. VIII. *How Gil Blas found that Fabricio's news was not false; the King's journey to Saragossa* 248
- CHAP. IX. *Of the revolution of Portugal, and the disgrace of the Count-Duke* 251
- CHAP. X. *Of the trouble and disquiet that at first disturbed the Count-Duke, and the happy tranquillity that followed it: how that minister employed himself in his retirement* 254
- CHAP. XI. *The Count-Duke grows on a sudden melancholy and pensive; the surprising cause of his sadness; and the fatal consequences thereof* 258
- CHAP. XII. *What passed at the castle of Loeches after the Count-Duke's death; and what course Santillane took* 262
- CHAP. XIII. *Gil Blas returns to his estate: his joy to find Seraphina his god-daughter marriageable; and with what lady he falls in love* 266
- CHAP. XIV. *Of the double marriage that was agreed on at Lirias, which at last concludes the history of Gil Blas de Santillane.* 271

THE
HISTORY
OF
GIL BLAS
DE SANTILLANE.

BOOK X.

CHAP. I.

Gil Blas sets out for Asturias ; he passes by Valladolid, where he goes to visit his old master Dr. Sangrado ; he meets by chance Signior Manuel Ordonez, administrator of the hospital.

AT the same time that I was preparing to set out from Madrid, with Scipio, for the Asturias, Pope Paul V. advanced the Duke of Lerma to the dignity of a Cardinal ; that pontiff being desirous of establishing the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, promoted that minister to the purple, to induce him to obtain King Philip's consent to so laudable a design ; and every one who was well acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, as well as I, that the church had gained a fine purchase.

Hereupon Scipio, who had rather have seen me in a splendid post at court, than buried in a retirement, advised me to make my appearance before the Cardinal: "Perhaps," said he, "when his Eminence sees you out of prison by the King's order, he will think he ought no longer to affect to seem incensed against you, and may take you again into his service." "Master Scipio," answered I, "you forget, no doubt, that I only obtained my liberty on condition of my going immediately out of the two Castiles: besides, do you think me already weary of my castle at Lirias? I have told you before, and now repeat it, That if the Duke of Lerma would restore me to his favour, and would even offer me the place of Don Rodriguez de Calderona, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken. I am determined to go to Oviedo in search of my parents, and to retire afterwards with them to the neighbourhood of Valencia: as for thee, friend, if thou repentest of having united thy fate to mine, thou needest only speak. I am ready to give thee half my treasure, and thou mayst stay at Madrid, where thou mayst push thy fortune as much as lies in thy power."

"How," replied my secretary, a little touched with these words, "can you suspect me of being at all averse to attending you to your retirement? this suspicion is injurious to my zeal and affection. What! Scipio, that faithful servant, who, to share your troubles, would willingly have passed the rest of his days with you in the tower of Segovia; will not he

he accompany you but with regret to an abode, that promises him a thousand pleasures ! no, no ; I have no mind to dissuade you from your resolution. I must e'en confess my roguery ; when I advised you to shew yourself to the Duke of Lerma, it was because I had a fancy to sound you, to see whether you had not still some seeds of ambition remaining in you. Well, since you are so entirely weaned from all thoughts of grandeur, let us quickly leave the court, and go enjoy those innocent and delicious pleasures, of which we have formed to ourselves such charming ideas."

In effect, we both set out soon after, in a chaise drawn by two good mules, and driven by a young fellow whom I thought fit to take into my service, to increase my retinue. We lay the first night at Alcala de Henares, and the second at Segovia, from whence, without stopping to see the generous Governour Tor-desillas, I went on to Penafel, upon the Duero, and the next day arrived at Valladolid. At the sight of this last city, I could not forbear fetching a deep sigh, which my companion hearing, asked the reason of. " The reason, my lad," said I, " is because I practised physic here a long while, for which my conscience now secretly reproaches me ; methinks all the patients I have killed are going to rise out of their graves, to come and tear me in pieces." " What an odd conceit is that !" said my secretary ; " indeed, Signior Santillane, you are too good. Why should you repent of having followed your business ? see the oldest physicians, are they troubled with

such scruples of conscience? not in the least, I assure you. They go on still at their old rate, with the greatest tranquillity in the world, imputing to nature all their miscarriages, and taking to themselves the credit of every lucky hit."

"It is very true," resumed I, "Doctor Sangrado, whose method I have followed to a tittle, was of that character. In vain did he see every day twenty people die under his hands; he was so fully persuaded of the excellence of bleeding in the arm, and drinking copiously of water, which he called his two specifics for all sorts of diseases, that instead of laying the blame on his medicines, he thought his patients only died for want of having drank enough, and having been sufficiently bled." "By St. Francis," cried Scipio, bursting into a fit of laughter, "you give me a description of a most incomparable person." "If you have a curiosity to see and hear him," said I, "you may easily satisfy it to-morrow morning, provided Sangrado be still alive, and is at Valladolid, which I can scarce believe, for he was pretty elderly when I left him, and a great many years are elapsed since that time."

Our first care, when we arrived at the inn where we took up our lodging, was to inquire after the doctor; and we heard that he was not yet dead, but that being no longer able at his age to make visits, or to undergo the fatigue inseparable from that profession, he had quitted the stage to three or four other doctors, who had brought themselves in vogue
by

by a new method of practice, which was scarce a jot better than his. We resolved then to stay at Valladolid the next day, both to let our mules take some rest, and to visit Signior Sangrado. Accordingly, we went to see him next morning about ten o'clock, and found him sitting in an easy chair with a book in his hand. He rose up as soon as he perceived us, came to meet us with a pretty firm tread for a man of seventy, and asked us whether we had any business with him. "What," said I, "Doctor, cannot you call me to mind? I have nevertheless the honour to have been one of your pupils. Do not you remember one Gil Blas, who was formerly your boarder and substitute?" "What, is it you Santillane?" answered he, embracing me. "I should not have recollected you; I am very glad to see you again; what have you done since our separation? undoubtedly you have persevered in the practice of physic." "That is what I had inclination enough to," replied I, "but strong reasons prevented me from it." "So much the worse," resumed Sangrado; "with the instructions you had received from me, you would have become an able physician, provided heaven had graciously preserved you from that dangerous love of chymistry. Ah! son," continued he, with a mournful air, "what a change has there been in physic within these few years! they deprive that science of its honour and dignity. That science, which in all times has had the greatest regard to mens lives, lies at present at the mercy of every rash and presumptuous

ignoramus; for facts speak for themselves; and in a little while, the very stones will cry out against the *mala praxis* of the new physicians: *lapides clamabunt*. One sees here in this city a set of doctors, or at least fellows that call themselves so, who have yoked themselves to draw in the triumphal chariot of antimony; *currus triumphalis antimonii*: a parcel of runaways from the school of Paracelsus, and adorers of kermes, who perform cures by chance, and make all the science of physic consist in preparing chymical medicines. What shall I say? every thing is so altered in their method, that one would scarce know they were practitioners of the same science. Bleeding in the foot, for instance, which of old was so uncommon, is now almost the only sort of phlebotomy that is in use. The mild and gentle cathartics that were formerly in vogue, are now changed to emetics, and to kermes. The whole practice is now nothing but a chaos, where every one takes what liberties he pleases, and breaks through the bounds of that order and circumspection that was enjoined by our first masters."

As much an inclination as I had to laugh on hearing this comical declaration, I had that command over myself to forbear it; I did yet more, for I inveighed bitterly against kermes without so much as knowing what it was, and, at all hazards, wished the devil had every one that invented it. Scipio perceiving that I made myself merry with this farce, was willing likewise to come in for his share. "Worthy Doctor," said he to Sangrado, "as

I had the honour of having a great uncle who was a practitioner according to the old laudable method, give me leave to join with you in exclaiming against all chymical remedies. My late great uncle (upon whom the Lord have mercy) was so zealous a stickler for Hippocrates, that he has often come to blows with empirics, who have not spoken with sufficient respect of this king of the physicians. Good blood cannot belie its extraction; I would willingly be a hangman myself to these ignorant innovators, of whom you complain with so much justice and eloquence. What disorders do such wretches cause in civil society!"

"These disorders," said the doctor, "go a great deal farther than you imagine; to little purpose did I publish a book against the enormities that have crept into the practice of physic; the evil gains new ground every day. The chirurgeons who are possessed with the frenzy of setting up for physicians, imagine themselves very capable of being complete doctors, as long as nothing more is required but giving kermes and emetics, to which they add bleeding in the foot, just as they have a fancy. They go even so far as to mix the kermes in apozems, and cordial potions, and then imagine themselves equal with the most celebrated practitioners. This contagion has spread even into the convents; insomuch that there are in the monasteries some friars, who are at once both apothecaries and chirurgeons. These apes of physicians apply themselves to chymistry, and make up pernicious medicines, with which they shorten the lives of the
reverend.

reverend fathers. In short, there are above threescore convents in Valladolid both of men and women; judge then of the havock made there by the kermes, in conjunction with emetics, and bleeding in the foot." "Signior Sangrado," said I then, interrupting him, "you are infinitely in the right of it, to be in a passion with those poisoners; I sympathise with you, and share equally in your concern and alarms for the lives of mankind, so manifestly endangered by a method so different from yours. I very much fear, that chymistry will one day prove the destruction of physic, as false coin causes the ruin of states. Heaven grant that fatal day may not be near at hand."

As I had thus said, an old maid-servant entered the room, who brought the doctor a salver, upon which was a French roll, a glass, and two little bottles, the one full of wine, and the other of water. After he had eaten a mouthful or two, he drank a glass of wine and water, of which, to say the truth, at least two thirds were water; but that did not save him from the reproaches which he gave me room to make him. "A! ha! Mr. Doctor," said I, "do I catch you in the fact! do you drink wine! you who have always declared against that liquor! you who for three parts of your life have drank nothing but water! how long have you acted so inconsistently with yourself? you cannot excuse yourself on account of your age, because in one part of your writings you define old age to be a natural phthisic, which dries up and consumes us; and, pursuant

purfuant to this definition, you deplore the ignorance of thofe perfons who call wine the milk of old age. What will you now fay in your juftification?"

"You fall upon me very unjuftly," answered the old doctor; "if I drank pure wine, you would have reafon to look upon me as an unfaithful obferver of my own method; but you fee that my wine is well diluted with water." "Another contradidtion, my dear mafter," replied I; "do not you remember that you found fault with the Canon Sedillo's drinking wine, although he mixed a great deal of water with it? Confefs fairly that you have found your error, and that wine is not fuch a pernicious liquor, as you have represented it in your writings, provided it is drank with moderation."

Thefe words put the doctor a little to a non-plus; he could not deny his having prohibited the ufe of wine in his works; but fhame and pride preventing him from acknowledging that I reproached him juftly, he was at a lofs what answer to make me. In order to extricate him from fo great a perplexity, I turned the difcourfe to another fubject, and a little after took my leave of him, with an exhortation to him, to perfift in his oppofition to the new practitioners: "Courage," faid I to him, "Signior Sangrado; never give over decrying the kermes, and continue always to ridicule bleeding in the foot. If, notwithstanding your zeal and affection for physical orthodoxy, this race of empirics fhould gain their ends in overthrowing all physical difcipline,

pline, you will at least have the consolation, of having made your utmost efforts to support it.

As my secretary and I were returning to our inn, and entertaining ourselves with the diverting character of this original of a doctor, a man of between fifty-five and sixty years of age, passed by us, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and a swinging pair of beads in his hand. I looked upon him very attentively, and knew him without much difficulty to be Signior Manuel Ordonez, that good administrator of the hospital, of whom so honourable mention is made in the first volume of my history. I accosted him with great marks of respect, and said, "I am the most humble servant of Signior Manuel Ordonez, the properest man in the world to take care of the poor's substance." At these words, he looked upon me stedfastly, and answered me, that my features were not unknown to him, but that he could not recollect where he had seen me. "I used to frequent your house," replied I, "about the time when you had one of my friends in your service, whose name was *Fabricio Nunez*." "Ah! I remember you," resumed the administrator with a malicious smile, "by the same token, that you were both pretty sparks, and have played abundance of fine pranks together. Well, what is become of that poor Fabricio? every time I think of him, it gives me some uneasiness about his circumstances."

"It was to give you some account of him, Signior Manuel," said I, "that I took the liberty

erty to stop you in the street : poor Fabricio is at Madrid, where he is employed in writing miscellaneous works." "Miscellaneous works !" said Signior Manuel ; " what do you mean by that ?" " I mean," answered I, " that he writes both in verse and prose. He makes comedies and romances : in a word, he is a man of wit, who meets with a very favourable reception at the houses of persons of figure." " But how does he stand with his baker ?" said the administrator. " Not so well as with people of fashion," answered I ; " under the rose, I believe him as poor as Job." " Oh, I do not in the least doubt it," replied Ordonnez ; let him make his court to men of quality, as much as he pleases, his complaisance, flattery, and cringing will bring him yet less than his works : I prophecy it, one day or other you will see him die in an hospital."

" That may very well be," rejoined I ; " poetry has brought many others to that wretched pass ; my friend Fabricio would have done much better to have continued in your service, he might have tumbled now in gold." " At least, he might have been very easy in his circumstances," said Signior Manuel. " I loved him, and went on raising him from post to post, in order to have procured him a solid settlement in the poor's house, when the whim took him to set up for a wit. He wrote a comedy which he got acted by a company of strollers, that were then in this city ; the play took, and the author's brain was turned from that moment. He imagined himself a
new

new Lopez de Vega ; and preferring the empty smoke of the public applause, to the solid advantages my friendship was preparing for him, he gave me warning to provide myself and desired his discharge.

In vain I did remonstrate to him, that he left the substance to snap at the shadow. He could not detain the fool, he was so strongly possessed with the frenzy of setting up for an author. He did not know his own happiness," continued Signior Manuel. "The lad took afterwards into my service can be a good witness of that ; having more good sense than Fabricio, though less wit, he has applied himself entirely to perform his business well and to please me ; accordingly I have advanced him, as he deserved ; and he is now actually possessed of two places in the hospital, the least of which is more than sufficient to maintain an honest man, though burthened with a large family.

C H A P. II.

Gil Blas pursues his journey, and arrives happily at Oviedo. In what condition he found his parents. His father dies ; the consequence of his death.

FROM Valladolid we reached Oviedo in four days, without meeting with any misfortune by the way, notwithstanding the Spanish proverb, which says, " That thieves can smell travellers money at a great distance." Nevertheless, there was a pretty good booty to be got, and two inhabitants only, of any subterraneous

subterraneous mansion, might, without much difficulty, have carried off our doubloons ; for he had not learned at court to grow brave, and Bertrand, my muleteer, did not seem of a humour to lose his life in defence of his master's purse : there was only Scipio then who had some courage.

It was night when we arrived at the city, and we went to lodge at an inn just by my uncle the canon Gil Perez. I was very glad to inform myself in what condition my parents were, before I appeared before them ; and, in order to that, I could not have addressed myself to any one better than the landlord or landlady of the inn, whom I knew to be people who could not be ignorant of their neighbours affairs. In effect, the landlord having called me 'to mind, after having looked me full in the face for some time very attentively, cried out, " By St. Anthony of Padua, this is the son of the honest groom, Blas de Santillane." " Yes, upon my life," says the landlady, " it is him, he is hardly altered at all. It is that little sprightly boy who had more wit than bulk ; methinks I see him still coming with his bottle, to fetch wine for his uncle's supper."

" Madam," said I, " you have an excellent memory ; but I beg you would tell me some news of my family ; my father and mother undoubtedly are in no very good situation." " That is but too true," answered the landlady. " In whatever melancholy condition you may represent them to yourself, it is impossible to imagine any people more to be pitied

tied than them. The good man, Gil Perez, is afflicted with the dead palsy on one side, and, according to all appearance, cannot live long. Your father, who within this little while has lived with that canon, is troubled with a catarrh, or, to speak more properly, is between life and death : and your mother, who has not the best health in the world, is forced to serve as nurse to them both."

On hearing so mournful an account, which made me feel that I was a son, I left Bertrand with my equipage at the inn, and hastened away to my uncle's, together with my secretary, who would not leave me. As soon as I appeared before my mother, a secret emotion, which I caused within her, informed her of my presence, before her eyes had singled out my features. "Son, said she to me mournfully, after having embraced me, "come and see your father give up the ghost : you are come time enough to be shocked with that cruel sight." Having thus said, she led me into a chamber, where the unfortunate Blas de Santillane lay almost at the last gasp, in a sorry bed, which gave evident demonstrations of the groom's poverty. Although he was then struggling with the agonies of death, he had yet some use of his senses. "My dear," said my mother to him, "here is your son Gil Blas, begs you to forgive him the vexation he has caused you, and desires your blessing." At these words, my father opened his eyes, which were just upon the point of being closed up for ever, and fixed them upon me ; and observing, notwithstanding the agony

agonny he was in, that I was afflicted at his loss, he was moved at my concern, and would have spoke, but had not strength. I took one of his hands, and, whilst I bathed it with my tears, without being able to utter one word, he gave up the ghost, as if he had waited only my arrival to breathe his last.

My mother was too much prepared for this event, to grieve at it immoderately; I was, perhaps, more afflicted at it than her, although my father never in his life gave me the least token of his affection. Besides that, my being his son was a sufficient cause to make me lament him. I could not forbear reproaching myself for not having assisted him in his distress; and when I reflected that I had been so hard-hearted, I looked upon myself as a monster of ingratitude, or rather a parricide. My uncle, whom I saw afterwards stretched out upon another sorry bed, and in a miserable condition, gave me fresh remorse. "Unnatural son," said I to myself, "think, for your punishment, on the distress your parents are in. If you had given them part of the superfluous riches you possessed before your imprisonment, you might have procured them conveniencies, which the revenue of the prebend could not afford them, and might, perhaps, have prolonged your father's days."

The unfortunate Gil Perez was grown a child again, and had no longer the use of either memory or judgment. In vain did I press him between my arms, and give him all imaginable testimonies of my affection; he was not at all sensible of them: in vain, like-

wife, did my mother tell him that I was his nephew Gil Blas ; he looked me in the face with a childish air, without making any answer. If love and gratitude had not obliged me to lament an uncle, to whom I owed so much, I could not have forborn it, on seeing him in a condition so worthy of pity.

During all the time, Scipio, who kept a profound silence, shared in all my trouble, and, with a friendly sympathy, returned me sigh for sigh. But, as I rightly judged, my mother, after so long an absence, would be desirous of having some discourse with me, and the presence of a man, of whom she had not the least knowledge, would lay her under a constraint, I took him aside, " Go, my lad," said I, " go to the inn and take your rest, whilst I stay here with my mother ; she will, perhaps, think you one too many in a conversation, which will turn only upon family-affairs."

Scipio immediately withdrew, for fear of making us uneasy ; and we entered forthwith into a conference, which lasted all that night. We mutually gave each other an exact account of all that had befallen us, since my departure from Oviedo. My mother first gave me an ample detail of all the chagrins she had undergone in the houses where she had been duenna, and, in so doing, told me a multitude of things which I should not have been well pleased to have had my secretary overhear, although I kept nothing secret from him : but, with all the respect due to the memory of my mother, the good old gentlewoman was a little prolix in her narratives, and might have
spared

pared me three parts of her story, if she had omitted all the unnecessary circumstances.

At last, she concluded her relation, and I began mine, in which I passed pretty cursorily over most of my adventures; but when I came to the visit made me at Madrid, by Bertrand Muscada the grocer at Oviedo's son, I enlarged very much upon that article. "I must confess, mother," said I, "that I gave that young fellow but a very indifferent reception; and, in revenge, no doubt but he gave you a terrible character of me." "He did not fail," answered she; "he found you, as he told us, so much puffed up with the favour of the first minister of the kingdom, that you would hardly vouchsafe to call him to mind; and when he gave you an ample account of our distress, you heard him as if you had been a statue. As fathers and mothers," continued she, "endeavour always to excuse their children, we could not believe you could be so hard-hearted: your coming to Oviedo justifies our good opinion of you, and the concern I see you in at present, sufficiently completes your vindication."

"You judge too favourably of me," replied I; "there is a great deal of truth in young Muscada's account. When he came to see me, I was wholly taken up with the thoughts of making my fortune; and the ambition, which had gotten full possession of my soul, left me no room to think in the least of my parents. It is not then much to be wondered at, if, in such a disposition of mind, I gave a disagreeable reception to a man who accosted me with

a clownish air, told me bluntly, that having heard I was as rich as a Jew, he came to advise me to send you some money, because you were in very great necessity; he even reproached me, in pretty rude terms, with my indifference for my family. I was shocked at his freedom, and, losing all patience, thrust him by the shoulders out of my closet. I confess I was in the wrong on this occasion; I ought to have considered that it was not your fault if the grocer wanted manners, and that his advice was, nevertheless, proper to be followed, though it had been given after a fashion that did not much please me."

"I even represented as much to myself, within a moment after I had turned away Muscada with so little ceremony: the voice of nature began to make itself heard; I called to mind all my duties to my parents, and, blushing with shame for having discharged myself of them so ill, I felt some remorse, which, nevertheless, I have no great reason to boast of to you, because it was soon stifled by my avarice and ambition. But sometime after, being imprisoned by the King's order, in the tower of Segovia, I was seized there with a dangerous illness; and it was this fortunate illness that gave your son once more back to your arms. Yes, it was my sickness, and my confinement, which have restored nature to all its rights, and have entirely weaned me from the court.

"My only ambition now is, to spend my days in solitude; and my coming to the Asturias was purely to beg you would share with me

me in the pleasures of a retired life : if you refuse not my request, I will conduct you to an estate of mine in the kingdom of Valencia, where we shall enjoy all the conveniences of a moderate fortune : you may easily judge, that it was my design to have carried my father likewise thither ; but since heaven has ordained it otherwise, let me at least have the satisfaction of having my mother under my roof, and of having it in my power to compensate for the time I spent without being serviceable to her, by all the care and tenderness imaginable for the future."

"I take your good intentions very kindly, son," answered my mother, "and would go with you, without hesitation, did I not find some difficulties in the execution of your design ; I will not abandon your uncle in his present forlorn condition, and I am too much used to this country, to go any distance from it : nevertheless, as the thing deserves to be maturely weighed, I will consider of it at leisure ; let us now bend all our thoughts on having your father decently laid in the ground."

"Let us leave that," said I, "to the young fellow you saw with me ; he is my secretary, and is both sensible and affectionate ; we may rely safely upon him."

I had scarcely uttered these words, when Scipio returned, it being already break of day, and asked us if we had occasion for his service in the perplexity we were then in. I answered, that he was come very seasonably, to receive some orders of importance I had to
give

give him. As soon as he knew what the business in question was, "That is enough," said he; "I have already ordered the whole ceremony in my head; you may depend upon me entirely." "Take care," said my mother to him, "not to make a funeral that looks in the least pompous; it cannot be too modest for my husband, whom all the city knew to have been a man in very indifferent circumstances." "Madam," answered Scipio, "had he been yet poorer than he was, I would not bate two maravedis of what I propose; I only regard my master therein; he has been favourite to the Duke of Lerma, his father ought to be buried nobly."

I approved of my secretary's design, and even charged him not to spare for money; some remains of vanity, which still lay lurking in me, revived in me on this occasion: I flattered myself, that in ordering an handsome funeral for a father who left me not a groat, I should make the city admire me for my generosity. On the other hand, my mother, however modest she affected to appear in her desires, was not displeased at having her husband buried with splendour. We left all, therefore, entirely to Scipio, who, without loss of time, took all the measures necessary for rendering the funeral noble and pompous.

He succeeded therein but too well; for he made such a magnificent burial, that he brought the whole city and suburbs upon my back: all the inhabitants of Oviedo, from the greatest to the least, were shocked at my ostentation. "This minister, made at a heat,"
said

mid one, "can find money to bury his father, but could not spare any to keep him alive." He would have done better," cried another, to have shewn his father some kindness whilst he was living, than to do him so much honour after his death." In short, the most biting taunts were not spared in the least; every one had his saying. Neither did they stop there; they insulted Scipio, Bertrand, and me, as we came out of church, loading us with abuses, hooting us through the streets, and even following Bertrand home to our inn with showers of stones. At last, in order to disperse the mob, who were gathered together in crowds about my uncle's house, my mother was obliged to shew herself, and protest publicly, that she was very well satisfied with my behaviour towards her. Others in the mean while, had run to the inn where my chaise was, with a design to break it all to pieces; which they had infallibly done, had not the landlord and landlady found the means to pacify these furious wretches, and divert them from their resolution.

All these outrageous affronts, which were but so many effects of the character the young grocer had given me in that city, inspired me with such a strong aversion to my countrymen, that I determined to leave Oviedo without delay, where otherways I might perhaps have made a pretty long stay. I declared as much plainly to my mother, who being herself very much mortified with the disagreeable reception the people had given me, did not in the least oppose such a sudden departure. The only

only question that now remained was, how she was to be disposed of. "Mother," said I, "since your assistance is absolutely necessary to my uncle, I will no longer press you to accompany me; but as he seems to draw very near his end, promise me to let me have your company at my estate, as soon as he shall be no more."

"I will not make you any such promise," answered my mother; "I am resolved to spend the rest of my days in the Asturias, and in an absolute independence. "Will you not always be absolute mistress at my house?" replied I. "That is more than I am sure of," resumed she; "you need only fall in love with some pretty girl; you will marry her; she will be my daughter-in-law, I shall be her mother-in-law; our tempers will not suit, and we shall not be able to live together."

"You foresee misfortunes," said I, "at too great a distance; I have not the least inclination for marriage: but should such a fancy come into my head, I will answer for it, I should know how to oblige my wife to a blind submission to your will." "That is promising very rashly," rejoined my mother; and I should desire other security besides yours, for the making good that promise. I would not even swear, that, in our broils, you would not take your spouse's part sooner than mine, let her be never so much in the wrong."

"You talk admirably well, Madam," cried my secretary, joining in the conversation; "I believe, as well as you, that tractable daughters-in-law are very scarce: wherefore, to
compromise

compromise matters between you and my master, since you are absolutely resolved on living in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must settle upon you an allowance of an hundred pistoles *per annum*, which I will bring you punctually every year; by this means, the mother and son will both live very well contented at an hundred leagues distance from each other." The two parties concerned highly approved of the proposed agreement, pursuant to which, I paid her down the first year's income beforehand; this done, I set out from Oviedo next morning before day, for fear of being treated by the mob like another St. Stephen. Such was the reception I met with in my own country; and it may serve as an useful lesson to such ordinary people, as, after having enriched themselves abroad, have a mind to return to the place of their nativity, and there set up for persons of importance.

C H A P. III.

Gil Blas sets out for the kingdom of Valencia, and arrives at last at Lirias. A description of his seat; how he was received there, and what people he there met with.

WE took the road to Leon, and so on to Palencia; and continuing our journey by little stages, we arrived at the close of the tenth day at Segorba; from whence, the next morning, we went on to my estate, which was distant but three leagues from that town.

town. In proportion as we drew near to it I observed that my secretary surveyed, with great attention, all the country-seats that lay within his sight, either on the right or left of the road: and when he perceived any one that made a fine appearance, he never failed shewing it me with his fingers, and saying, "I wish that were to be our retreat."

"I know not, friend," answered I, "what notion you may have of our future abode: but if you please your fancy with the imagination that it is a magnificent seat, I give you notice beforehand that you are prodigiously mistaken.

"If you have not a mind to be a bubble to your own fancy, imagine to yourself the little house given by Mecænas to Horace, in the Sabines country, and on the banks of the Tiber; Don Alphonso has made me much such another present." "I must expect then to find only a cottage," replied Scipio. "Remember nevertheless," resumed I, "that I have given you a very modest description of it; and you may now judge for yourself, whether I have drawn an exact picture: cast your eyes towards the Guadalaviar, and observe yonder little hamlet of nine or ten cottages, situate upon its banks, you there will see a house that has four little pavilions; that is my seat."

"What the deuce," cried my secretary, with a tone of admiration, "that house is a perfect jewel! Besides the genteel air which its pavilions give it, one may say that it is finely situate, charmingly built, and surrounded with a country more delightful even than the neighbourhood

neighbourhood of Seville, called by way of excellence, *the Terrestrial Paradise*. Had we had the liberty of chusing a mansion for ourselves, it could not have been more to my fancy; a lovely river waters its fields, and a fine thick wood offers its friendly gloomy covert, to shade us when we have a mind to take a walk in the heat of the day. Delicious solitude! Ah! my dear master, we are very likely to stay here for a considerable time.” “I am very glad,” answered I, “that you are so well pleased with our retirement, though you are not yet acquainted with all its charms.”

As we went on talking after this manner, we advanced towards the house, whose gate was opened to us in an instant, as soon as Scipio had said, that I was Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, come to take possession of my estate. On pronouncing this name, so much respected by the persons who heard it, my chaise was admitted into a large courtyard, where I alighted; then leaning very magisterially upon Scipio, and looking as big as Alexander the Great, I went into a parlour, where between seven and eight domestics made their appearance. They told me they came to present their duty to me as their new master: that Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them to serve me; one as cook, another as under-cook, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as footmen; with a strict charge not to take any money from me: those two noblemen resolved to be at all the expence of my house-keeping.

The cook, who was called *Mr. Joachim*, was the head of these domestics, and spokesman for them all. He told me he had laid in an ample provision of the best wines in Spain; and that for good cheer, he hoped such an artist as he, who had been six years cook to the Bishop of Valencia, should know how to make ragouts that would please my palate, and give a new edge to my appetite. "I am going, Sir," added he, "to give you a sample of my skill; take a walk till dinner is ready, and look over your house; see if you think it in fit order for your reception."

I leave it to be judged whether I neglected following this advice; and Scipio, more curious than I, dragged me from chamber to chamber. We ran over the whole house from top to bottom, without leaving the least hole, (at least, as we thought,) unvisited by our self-interested curiosity; and I had every where reason to admire the goodness of Don Cæsar and his son. I was struck, among other things, with two apartments, which were as well furnished as could be, without being magnificent. One of them was hung with a Flemish tapestry, to which was added a velvet bed and chairs, all of them still fresh, yet made at the time that the Moors were masters of the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other apartment was altogether as antique; being an old suit of hangings of yellow Genoa damask, with a bed, and easy chairs of the same, set off with a blue silk fringe. All these things, which in an inventory would

would have been appraised at very little, made there a very good appearance, and seemed of great value.

After having well examined every thing, my secretary and I returned to the parlour, where a cloth was laid with two plates, napkins, and all other appurtenances. We sat down to table, and that moment were regaled with an * olla podrida, so exquisitely delicious, that we pitied the Archbishop of Valencia, for no longer having the cook who had dressed it : we had indeed a very good appetite, which made us think it better than we should otherwise have done. Every mouthful that we ate, my footmen of a new date presented us large glasses, filled up to the brim, with exquisite wine of La Mancha, the country of the celebrated Don Quixote.

Scipio, not daring before them to discover the inward satisfaction he felt at being in so agreeable a situation, declared it to me sufficiently by some very expressive glances that spoke his mind ; and I let him know by some looks of mine, that I was full as well contented as himself. A second course of fat quails, set round a little leveret, of an admirable flavour, made us quit the olla podrida, and completed our repast. When we had ate like two hunters, and drank in proportion, we rose from table to walk in the garden, and take our siesta † voluptuously, in some cool and agreeable shade.

If my secretary had appeared vastly pleased

C 2

till

* A dish of hodge-podge.

† Nap after dinner, which is usual in hot countries.

till then with all he had seen, he was infinitely more so, when he beheld the garden. He thought it equal to that of the Escorial: it is true, Don Cæsar, who came from time to time to Lirias, took a pleasure in having it well cultivated and embellished. All the walks finely gravelled and bordered with orange trees; a large bason of white marble, in the midst whereof a brass lion spouted out water in great streams; the beauty of the flowers, and variety of the fruits, were all objects which charmed Scipio to an ecstasy: but he was particularly delighted with a long walk which went by an easy descent to the farmer's lodge, who looked after the estate: this walk was sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun, by the friendly shade of large trees, whose leafy branches mutually interwoven with each other, shut out day, and afford no more light than a pleasing gloom. As we were launching out into praises of a place so proper to serve as a shelter from the heat, we stopt, and sat us down at the foot of a fine elm, where sleep found it no difficulty to surprise two boon companions, just come from a plentiful dinner.

We started out of our sleep two hours afterwards at the report of several guns, which sounded so near us, that we were alarmed thereat: we got up then hastily, and in order to discover what it was, went on directly to the farmer's lodge. There we found eight or ten country men, all inhabitants of the hamlet, who were met together, and were firing, and cleaning their rusty pieces, to celebrate

my

my arrival, of which they had just got intelligence. The most of them knew me, having seen me more than once at this feat, in quality of steward to the Lords of Leyva: wherefore, they no sooner perceived me, than they cried out all together, "Long live our new lord of the manor, he is welcome to Lillas;" which said, they new-charged their pieces, and saluted me with a general discharge. I gave them the most gracious reception that was possible, but with a grave air, not judging it proper to make myself too familiar with them, and assured them of my protection. I even gave twenty pistoles among them, which was not, I believe, the least agreeable part of my behaviour. This done, I left them to throw away some more powder, and retired with my secretary to the wood, where we walked till night without being tired of seeing nothing but trees; so many charms do we find at first, in the possession of a newly-acquired estate.

During this time, the cook, under-cook, and scullion, had not been idle; they had been employed in preparing us a supper superior to our dinner; and we were surprised to the last degree, on returning back to the parlour, where we had dined, to see four young partridges set upon a table, with a fri-cassée of rabbits on one side, and a ragout of capons on the other; after which was served up a second course of pig's-ears, marinated pullets, and cream-chocolate. We drank plentifully of Lucena wine, and even of several other delicious wines; and when we found

we could not bear more without endangering our healths, we bethought ourselves of going to bed. Then my footmen, taking candles, lighted me to the handsomest apartment, where they strove who should be the first to undress me; but when they had given me my nightgown and cap, I dismissed them all, telling them with a magisterial air, "You may be gone, Gentlemen; I have no need of your assistance for any thing else."

Having sent them all away, and detained only Scipio to talk a little with him, I asked him what he thought of the treatment I met with by the order of the Lords of Leyva? "Faith," said he, "I think you cannot be used better; I only wish that this may hold long." "I do not wish so in the least," answered I; "it does not suit my temper, to suffer my benefactors to be at such great expences on my account; it would be abusing their generosity: besides, I could never away with servants who are to receive their wages from others: I should fancy myself not to be in my own house; more than this, I did not come hither to live with so much noise. Have we any necessity for such a great number of domestics? No; with Bertrand, we want no more than a cook, a scullion, and one footman." Although my secretary would not have been displeased with being maintained always at the expence of the governour of Valencia, he did not oppose my delicacy upon that head, but conforming himself to my sentiments, approved of the reformation I intended to make in my family. This point being

being decided, he went out of my apartment, and retired to his own.

C H A P. IV.

He sets out for Valencia, to see the Lords of Leyva; of the discourse he had with them, and the good reception he met with from Seraphina.

I Then made an end of undressing myself, and went to bed, where, not finding myself at all disposed to sleep, I gave myself up to my reflections. I represented to myself the friendship with which the Lords of Leyva repaid my zeal for their service; and being sensibly affected with the new marks they had shewn me of their good-will, took a resolution to visit them next morning, in order to satisfy the impatience I had to thank them. I pleased myself also beforehand with the thoughts of seeing Seraphina; but this pleasure was not without some alloy; I could not think without uneasiness, that I must at the same time be forced to encounter the looks of Signiora Lorenza Sephora, who perhaps still remembering the adventure of the box on the ear, would not be much overjoyed at beholding me again. My mind being wearied out with all these different reflections, I fell at last asleep, from which I did not awake till next day after sun-rise.

I was soon out of bed, and, wholly taken up with my intended journey, dressed myself in a hurry. Just as I had made an end of putting myself in order, my secretary entered the room. "Scipio," says I, "you see a man who

who is getting ready to set out instantly for Valencia ; I cannot go too soon to pay my respects to the Lords to whom I owe my little fortune ; every moment that I defer discharging this duty, seems to accuse me of ingratitude. As for thee, friend, I dispense with thy attending me thither ; stay here in my absence, I will return to thee again in a week's time." " Go, Sir," answered he, " make your court well to Don Alphonso, and his father ; they seem sensibly affected with the zeal any one shews for them, and very grateful for any service that is done them ; persons of that character are so uncommon, that one cannot shew them too great a regard. I then gave orders to Bertrand, to get himself ready to set out, and while he was putting the mules to, I drank my chocolate. This done, I got into my chaise, after having given my servants a strict charge, to look upon my secretary as myself, and to pay equal obedience to his orders.

I reached Valencia in less than four hours, and went directly to the governour's stables where I alighted, and left my equipage ; this done, I made the servants shew me to that nobleman's apartment, where he then was with Don Cæsar his father. I opened the door without ceremony, entered the room, and addressing myself to them both : " Servants," said I, " never send any one before them to give their masters notice of their coming ; here is one of your old domestics makes bold to pay you his respects." At these words, I would have thrown myself at their feet, but they

they prevented me, and embraced me each of them with all the marks of a real affection.

Well, my dear Santillane," said Don Alphonso, "have you been at Lirias to take possession of your estate?" "Yes, my Lord," answered I; "and I beseech you, give me leave to restore it to you." "Why so?" resumed he.

"Is there any thing disagreeable therein, that gives you a disliking to it?"

"Not in itself," replied I; "on the contrary, I am charmed with it to the last degree; all that displeases me therein, is, to see cooks to archbishops, with three times as many domestics as I have any occasion for, and who are of no manner of use but to put you to an expence as considerable as useless."

"If," said Don Cæsar, "you had accepted the pension of two thousand ducats which we offered you at Madrid, we should have contented ourselves with giving you the estate, with the house furnished as it now is: but you know you refused it; wherefore we thought ourselves obliged, in return, to do as we have done." "It is too much," answered I; "your goodness ought to be satisfied with the gift of this estate, which has wherewith to satisfy the utmost of my desires; but, exclusive of what it costs you to maintain so many people at a great charge, I protest to you, that those fellows lay me under a constraint, and are troublesome to me. In a word," pursued I, "my Lords, either take back your estate, or vouchsafe to let me enjoy it after my own fancy." I spoke these last words with such a serious air, that the father and

and son, who did not in the least desire to lay me under any restraint, consented at last to let me do as I pleased in my own house.

I was returning them many thanks for having granted me this liberty, without which I could never be happy, when Don Alphonso interrupted me, by saying, "My dear Gil Blas, I will present you to a lady, who will be overjoyed to see you." Having thus said, he took me by the hand, and led me to Seraphina's apartment. "Madam," said the governour, "I believe the arrival of our friend Gil Blas at Valencia, is not less agreeable to you than to me." "He ought to be very well satisfied of that," answered she; "time has not erased out of my memory the service he did me, and I add to my gratitude for that, the acknowledgments I owe a man to whom you have some obligations." I told the governour's lady, that I was but overpaid for the danger I had shared with her deliverers, in exposing my life for her. After a multitude of compliments on both sides, Don Alphonso led me back again out of Seraphina's apartment, and we rejoined Don Cæsar, whom we found in a parlour, with several persons of quality, who were come thither to dinner.

All these gentlemen saluted me very politely, and were the more prolix in their civilities, because Don Cæsar told them that I had been one of the principal secretaries to the Duke of Lerma. Perhaps most part of them might not even be ignorant that it was by my interest Don Alphonso had obtained the government of Valencia; for every thing comes

comes out. However that be, when we were set down to table, all the talk was of the new cardinal ; some launched out, or affected to launch out into great encomiums on him, whilst others only gave him some faint praises, that seemed to carry a sting in the tail of them. I rightly judged that their design was to draw me in thereby to give my sentiments of his Eminency, and to divert them at his expence. I could willingly have told them my thoughts upon that head, however I restrained my tongue ; which made me pass, in the opinion of the company, for a very discreet young fellow.

The guests after dinner retired to their own homes to take their fiesta, and Don Cæsar and his son, being disposed to do the same, withdrew to their own apartments. As for my own part, being full of impatience to see a city whose beauty I had heard highly extolled, I went out of the governour's palace, with design to take a walk through the principal streets, and observe what was most remarkable therein. I was stopped, however, at the gate by a man who accosted me, and said, " Will Signior de Santillane give me leave to pay him my respects ?" I asked him who he was. " I am," said he, " valet de chambre to Don Cæsar ; I was one of his footmen at the same time that you was steward ; I made my court to you every morning, and you shewed me abundance of kindness ; I used to inform you of all that passed in the house. Do not you remember that one day I acquainted you, how the surgeon of the village

village of Leyva, was admitted secretly into the chamber of Signiora Lorenza Sephora."

"I remember it very well," answered I; "but now we are talking of that duenna, what is become of her?" "Alas!" replied he, "the poor creature, after your departure, fell into a consumption, and died soon after, more lamented by Seraphina, than by Don Alphonso, who seemed very little concerned at her death."

Don Cæsar's valet de chambre having thus informed me of Sephora's melancholy end, excused himself for having stopt me, and left me to pursue my way. I could not help sighing on calling to mind that unfortunate duenna; and compassionating her fate, I imputed her misfortune to myself, without reflecting that it was rather to her cancer, than my merit that it was to be ascribed.

I observed with pleasure all that seemed to be worthy remarking in that city. The archbishop's marble palace entertained my eyes agreeably, as well as the fine piazzas of the exchange; but a great building, which I perceived at a good distance, and into which a bundance of people entered, took up all my attention. I drew towards it to learn why I saw there so great a concourse of men and women, and soon found out the reason, by reading these words, written in gold letters upon a black marble that was over the door, *La posada de los representantes*, the playhouse: and it was given out in the bills, that a new tragedy of Don Gabriel Triaquero's was to be acted there that night, for the first time.

C H A P. V.

Gil Blas goes to the playhouse, where he sees a new tragedy. The success of that piece. The genius of the people of Valencia.

I Stopped some moments at the door, to observe the persons who entered; and I observed of all sorts. I saw cavaliers of a good mien, and richly dressed, and some figures as ordinary as ill clothed. I perceived ladies with high titles, who alighted out of their coaches, to go into the boxes that had been kept for them, and ladies of pleasure that went to draw in bubbles. This confused concourse of spectators of all sorts, inspired me with an inclination to make one of the number. Just as I was going to take a ticket, the governour and his lady arrived, and perceiving me in the crowd, ordered me to be called, and forced me along with them into their box; where I placed myself behind them in such a manner, that I could easily speak to either of them.

I found the house crowded from the top to the bottom; a pit thronged as full as they could stick, and a stage loaded with knights of the three military orders. "On my word," said I to Don Alphonso, "here is a numerous assembly." "You need not wonder at that," answered he; "as soon as the playhouse bills give out a new play of this author's, the whole city of Valencia are up in arms: both men and women talk of nothing but this piece; all the boxes are taken up; and the first

night of acting, the people crowd one another to death to get in ; though all the places are at double prices, except the pit, of which they stand in too much awe, to dare to put them in an ill humour." "What a frenzy !" said I to the governour ; "this violent curiosity of the public, this prodigious impatience to hear every new production of Don Triaquero's, gives me a great idea of this poet's genius."

As we were thus discoursing, the actors appeared ; upon which we immediately ceased talking, to hear them with the more attention. The applauses began even at the very opening of the play ; at every verse the actors were clapped ; but at the end of each act, there was such a thunder of applause, that one would have thought the playhouse would have tumbled about one's ears. When the play was over, they shewed me the author, who went modestly from box to box, to present his head to the laurel chaplets, with which the noblemen and ladies were preparing to crown it.

We returned from thence to the governour's palace, whither we were followed soon after by three or four knights ; two old authors also came in, who were very much esteemed in their way, and, with them, a gentleman of Castile, who had good sense, and a fine taste. Nothing was talked of during supper, but the new play. "Gentlemen," says a knight of the order of St. Jago, "what do you think of this tragedy ? Is it not what one may call a finished piece ? Sublime thoughts, tender sentiments, manly verifications,

tions, nothing is wanting. In a word, it is a poem that must please all good judges," "I do not believe any one can think otherwise," said a knight of the order of Alcantara. "This piece is full of speeches that seem dictated by Apollo himself, as well as of surprising incidents, that are introduced with infinite art. I refer myself to this gentleman," pursued he, addressing himself to the Castilian; "he seems to be a judge; I will lay a wager he is of my opinion." "Do not lay, Sir," answered the gentleman, with a malicious smile; "I am not of this country; we do not decide matters so hastily at Madrid. Far from judging of a piece that we have heard but once acted, we are distrustful of its beauties, whilst it is only in the mouths of the actors; however well affected we are in its favour, we suspend our judgment till we have perused it; and really it does not always give us the same pleasure in the reading, as it did in seeing it on the stage.

"We examine then a poem scrupulously," pursued he, "before we set any value upon it; the reputation of its author, though never so great, cannot blind us. When Lopez de Vega himself, and Calderona wrote new pieces, they met with severe judges in their greatest admirers, who did not extol them to the skies, till they judged their works well deserved that honour."

"Oh, by St. Francis," says the knight of the order of St. Jago, "we are not so timorous here as you at Madrid; we do not wait till a piece is printed to give our judgment of it;

as soon as we have seen it once acted, we know its value to an ace. It is not even necessary that we should hearken to it very attentively ; it is sufficient we know it as a piece of Don Gabriel's, to be convinced it is without fault. The works of this poet ought to serve as an æra from whence to date the rise of a good taste. Your Lopez and Calderona were but novices, in comparison of this great master of the stage."

* The gentleman, who looked upon Lopez de Vega, and Calderona, as the Sophocles and Euripides of the Spaniards, was shocked at this rash discourse. "What a dramatic sacrilege is this !" cried he. "Since you oblige me, Gentlemen, to judge, like yourselves, upon only seeing it once acted, I must tell you, that I am far from being pleased with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel's. It is a poem stuffed with passages that are rather flashy than solid. Three parts of the verses are either bad, or the rhymes uncorrect ; the characters are either ill formed, or ill supported, and the thoughts often very obscure."

The two authors who were by, and who, through a modesty as commendable as uncommon, had said nothing for fear of being suspected of jealousy and envy, could not help discovering their approbation of the gentleman's judgment with their eyes ; which made me imagine, that their silence proceeded more from their policy, than from the perfection of the play. As for the knights of Alcantara and St. Jago, they began afresh to extol Don Gabriel, and placed him even amongst the

the gods. This extravagant apotheosis, and blind idolatry, made the Castilian quite out of patience; wherefore, lifting up his hands to heaven, he cried out on a sudden, in a sort of enthusiasm, "O divine Lopez de Vega, uncommon and sublime genius, who hast left an immense distance between thee and all the Gabriels, who would pretend to vie with thee! and thou, O Calderona, the elegant and chaste sweetness of whose epic poetry is inimitable, fear not either of you, that this new nursling of the muses, will be ever able to destroy the altars raised to your honour. He will be very fortunate, if posterity, whose delight you will one day be, as you are now ours, so much as chance to hear his name once mentioned."

This pleasant apostrophe, which nobody expected, made the whole company laugh; after which they rose from table, and went home. As for my part, I was conducted, by Don Alphonso's order, to a handsome apartment that had been prepared for me: there I found a good bed, in which I soon fell asleep, deploring, as well as the gentleman of Castile, the injustice done Lopez de Vega, and Calderona, by a parcel of ignorant wretches.

C H A P. VI.

Gil Blas, walking through the streets, meets a friar, whom he fancies he knows; who this friar was.

AS I could not see the whole city the day before, I got up, and went out next morning,

morning, with an intent to take a view of it again. As I was executing this design, I perceived in the street a Carthusian friar, who was going, no doubt, to attend the business of his society. He walked with his eyes fixed on the ground, and had so devout an air, that he drew upon him the eyes of every beholder. As he happened to pass very near me, I observed him attentively, and thought I saw in him my old acquaintance Don Raphael, that knight-adventurer, of whom such honourable mention is made in the two first volumes of my history.

I was so much astonished, so moved at this rencounter, that, instead of accosting the friar, I remained motionless for some minutes, which gave him an opportunity to get some distance from me. "Good heavens!" said I to myself, "had ever two faces a more exact resemblance of each other? What must I think? ought I to believe it is Raphael? or can I bring myself to imagine it is not him?" I was too curious to know the truth of this affair, to be able to remain in this uncertainty; wherefore, I got one to shew me the way to the Carthusian monastery, whither I went directly, in hopes of having another view of my gentleman when he returned thither; and fully resolved to stop him, and speak to him. However, I had no need to wait his coming back, to be informed of the truth; for, on my arrival at the gate of the convent, another face of my acquaintance put me soon out of suspense, and turned my doubts into certainty; for, in the friar, who officiated as
porter,

porter, I discovered Ambrose de Lamela my quondam footman.

Our surprise was equal on both sides, on meeting each other so unexpectedly in that place. Is it no illusion ?" said I, accosting him ; " is it actually one of my old friends whom I behold ?" He did not remember me at first, or rather he pretended not to remember me ; but considering within himself, that this feint would be to no purpose, he put on the air of a man who recollects on a sudden a thing he had forgotten. " Ah ! Signior Gil Blas," cried he, " forgive me for having been able to let you slip out of my memory ; ever since I have lived in this holy place, and applied myself to discharge those duties which are enjoined us by our rules, I lose insensibly the remembrance of all worldly affairs."

" It is a sincere pleasure to me," answered I, " to behold you again, after a ten years separation, in such a venerable habit." " And it is with shame," replied he, " that I appear clothed with it, before a man, who has been a witness of the sinful life I have led : this habit reproaches me with it continually : alas !" pursued he, fetching a deep sigh, " in order to have been truly worthy to have worn it, I ought always to have lived in innocence."

" By this-discourse, which rejoices me," replied I, " one may plainly see, dear brother, that the finger of the Lord has touched you. I repeat it again, I am overjoyed at it, and long impatiently to know, in what miraculous manner you fell into the right way, you and Don Raphael ; for I am now convinced

vinced it was him I just now met in the street, in a Carthusian habit. I repented my not having stopt him, and spoke to him, and am now waiting for him here, to make amends for my neglect, when he returns to convent."

"You were not mistaken," resumed Lamela: "it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as for the account you desire of our conversion, it was thus: After having parted with you at Segorba, the son of Lucinda and I took the road to Valencia, with design to give the world there some new specimen of our dexterity in our profession. Chance, or rather providence, would have it, that one day we went into the Carthusian church, just at the time that the good fathers were chanting the psalms in the choir. We happened to observe them with great attention, and found by experience, that even the most wicked cannot forbear reverencing virtue. We admired the fervent zeal with which they offered up their prayers; as also, their mortified looks, which shewed them quite weaned from the gross pleasures of this world; and the serenity that reigned in their countenances, which so evidently shewed the tranquillity of their consciences.

"On making these observations, we fell into a profound reverie, which proved salutary to our souls. We compared our lives and manners with those of these good fathers, and the difference we found between them, filled us with trouble and anxiety. "Lamela," said Don Raphael to me, when we were
got

got out of the church, "how do you find yourself affected by what we have just seen? As for my part, I cannot hide it from you, my mind is far from being at ease. Some emotions, that are quite new to me, disturb me strangely; and I now, for the first time in my whole life, reproach myself with my iniquities." "I am in the very same frame of mind," answered I; "the wicked actions I have committed rise up now in judgment against me, and my heart, which never before was sensible of remorse, is at present upon the rack therewith." "Ah! dear Ambrose," rejoined my comrade, "we are two strayed sheep, whom the heavenly Father, in his great mercy, designs to bring back to the fold. It is he, dear brother, it is he who calls us; let us not be deaf to his voice; let us renounce our villainies; let us quit the licentiousness wherein we have hitherto lived; and let us begin, from this very day, to labour seriously at the great work of our salvation; we must pass the rest of our days in this convent, and devote them to a sincere repentance."

"I approved highly of Raphael's sentiments," pursued Friar Ambrose; "and we took, that very moment, the generous resolution to turn Carthusians. In order to put this our design in execution, we addressed ourselves to the prior, who no sooner knew our intent, than, to try the sincerity of our call, he ordered us cells, and had us treated like Carthusians for a whole year. We complied with the rules of the order, with so much exactness and constancy, that we were received among

among the novices. We were so well pleased with our state, and so full of zeal, that we underwent with courage the fatigues of the time destined for our probation. We were afterwards professed; which done, Don Raphael seeming of a genius proper for business, was chosen to ease an old father who then managed the affairs of the convent. Lucinda's son could have liked better to have spent all his time in prayer; but he was obliged to sacrifice his zeal to devotion, to the necessity they stood in of his assistance. He acquired, in a short time, such a perfect knowledge of the concerns of the house, that he was judged proper to succeed the old father, who died three years afterwards, in managing all their affairs; which employment he is actually in at this time; and indeed, he discharges himself of it, to the great satisfaction of all the good fathers, who highly extol his conduct in the management of our temporalities. What is most surprising is, that, notwithstanding the burthen that lies upon him of gathering our revenues, he seems wholly taken up with the thoughts of eternity. If he has but one moment's respite from business, he is immediately buried in profound meditations: in a word, he is one of the best members of our community."

Here I interrupted Lamela, by a transport of joy, which broke from me at the sight of Raphael. "Here he is," cried I, "here he is, that righteous steward, whose arrival I waited with so much impatience:" at the same time, I ran to meet him, and took him

in

in my arms. He received my embrace with a very good grace, and, without shewing the least surprise at meeting me, said with a voice full of sweetness: "God be praised, Signior de Santillane, God be praised for the satisfaction I have in seeing you again." "Indeed," answered I, "dear Raphael, I sympathise, as much as possible, with you, in your good fortune. Friar Ambrose has given me the account of your conversion; and this account has charmed me. What a happiness is it to you two, my friends, that you may flatter yourselves with the hopes of being of that small number of the elect, who are one day to enjoy eternal felicity!"

"Two such wretches as we," replied the son of Lucinda, with an air that expressed abundance of humility, "ought not to conceive such hopes; but the repentance of sinners makes them find pardon from the Father of mercies." "And you, Signior Gil Blas," pursued he, "do not you also think of deserving forgiveness of him, for all the offences you have committed against him? What business brings you to Valencia? are not you unfortunately concerned in some dangerous employment?" "No, thank Heaven," answered I; "since I have left the court, I live like an honest man; sometimes I enjoy all the pleasures of the country at an estate I have some leagues from hence, and sometimes I come hither to pass a few days with the governour of Valencia, who is my friend, and whom you both know very well."

Then I told them the story of Don Alphonso

so de Leyva, to which they listened with great attention ; and when I came to my carrying from that nobleman the three thousand ducats we had stolen from Samuel Simon, Lamela interrupted me, and directing his discourse to Don Raphael, " Father Hilary," said he, " by this account, the good merchant ought not to complain of a theft, that has been restored to him with usury ; and we may both of us set our consciences at rest upon that head." " In effect," said the steward, " Friar Ambrose and I, before we entered the convent, got fifteen hundred ducats secretly conveyed to Samuel Simon, by an honest ecclesiastic, who was willing to take upon himself the trouble of going to Xelva to make this restitution : so much the worse for Samuel, if he has been capable of fingering this sum, after having been reimbursed the whole by the Signior de Santillane." " But," said I, interrupting him, " are you sure your fifteen hundred ducats were delivered to him faithfully ?" " Undoubtedly," cried Don Raphael ; " I would answer for the integrity of the ecclesiastic, as much as for my own." " I also would be bound for him," said Lamela ; " he is a good priest, accustomed to trusts of this nature, insomuch that he has had two or three law-suits for money committed to his charge, which he has gained with costs."

Our conversation lasted for some time longer, after which we parted ; they continually exhorting me to have the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and I recommending myself to their pious prayers. I went from thence directly

directly to Don Alphonso. "You would never be able to guess," said I, "with whom I have just now had a long discourse; I am this moment come from two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance; one of their names is, *Father Hilary*, and the other, *Friar Ambrose*." "You must be mistaken," answered Don Alphonso, "I am not acquainted with any one Carthusian whatsoever." "Excuse me," replied I, "you have seen *Friar Ambrose* commissary of the inquisition at Xelva, and *Father Hilary* his register." "Heavens!" cried the governour in a surprise, "is it possible that *Raphael* and *Lamela* should be turned Carthusians?" "Yes certainly," answered I; "it is some years ago since they were professed, insomuch that the first is steward, and the other porter of the convent."

Upon this, Don Cæsar's son was thoughtful for some moments; after which, shaking his head, "This commissary of the inquisition, and his register," said he, "seem to me very likely to play some new prank here." "You judge of them with prejudice," replied I; "as for me, who have discoursed with them, I have a more favourable opinion of them. It is true, one cannot see the bottom of mens hearts; but according to all appearances, they are two rogues converted." "That is not impossible," resumed Don Alphonso; "there are many libertines, who, after having scandalized the world by their debaucheries, shut themselves up in convents to do penance severely for the same; I wish our friars may prove a pair of such libertines."

“Why not?” said I. “They have embraced the monastic life of their own accords, and have already lived for a considerable time, like two upright friars.” “You may say what you please,” answered the governour, “but I do not approve of the convent’s money being in the hands of this friar Hilary, of whom I cannot help having some mistrust. When I think of the fine story he told us of his adventures, I tremble for the Carthusians. I am as willing to believe as you, that he has taken the friar’s habit with very upright intentions; but the sight of the gold may awaken his covetousness once more. One ought never to intrust the keys of a cellar with a drunkard that has renounced wine.”

Don Alphonso’s mistrust was fully justified a few days afterwards; for the steward and the porter disappeared on a sudden with the cash. This news, which was immediately spread through the city, did not fail to divert the laughers, who always rejoice at any mischief that befalls the rich monks. As for the governour and myself, we pitied the Carthusians, without boasting of our having known the two apostates.

C H A P. VII.

Gil Blas returns to his castle at Lirias; the agreeable news Scipio tells him, and the reformation they made in the family.

I Spent a week at Valencia amongst the beau-monde, and lived like your Counts and your Marquisses. Shows, balls, concerts,

certs, entertainments, assemblies, and the company of agreeable ladies, all these amusements were procured me by the governour and his lady, to whom I made my court so well, that it was with regret they saw me set out on my return to Lirias. They even obliged me, before they would let me go, to promise to share my time between them and my solitude. It was agreed, that I should live, during the winter, at Valencia, and during the summer, at my estate; after this agreement, my benefactors left me at liberty to go and enjoy their benefits.

Scipio, who waited impatiently for my return, was overjoyed to see me again; and I redoubled his joy by the faithful relation I made him of the fruits of my journey. "And you, friend," said I to him afterwards, "what use have you made here of the days of my absence? have you had a good deal of diversion?" "As much," answered he, "as a servant can have, who values nothing so much as his master's presence. I have walked over every foot of our little dominions: sometimes sitting by the side of the fountain that is in our wood, I have taken pleasure in contemplating its waters, which are as pure as those of the sacred spring, that used to make the vast forest of Albunea resound with its noise; and sometimes lying at the foot of a tree, I have listened to the sweet melody of the nightingales and linnets; in short, I have been a-shooting, and I have fished; and, what has pleased me yet more than all these amusements, I have read several books, that are as useful as diverting."

Here I interrupted my secretary with precipitation, to ask him whence he had those books. "I found them," answered he, "in a fine library that is in this house, - and to which Mr. Joachim shewed me the way." "And in what place," resumed I, "can this pretended library ly hid?" "did we not view all the house on the very day of our arrival?" "So you think," replied he; "but know, that we looked only into three pavilions, and that we forgot the fourth. It was there Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, used to spend part of his time in reading. There are several excellent books in this library, which have been left you as a certain remedy against melancholy, when our gardens stript of flowers, and our woods bare of leaves, will no longer have wherewith to preserve you from it. The Lords of Leyva have not done things by halves; they have provided for the sustenance of the mind, as well as of the body."

This news gave me a real joy; I made him shew me to the fourth pavilion, which entertained me with a very agreeable sight. I found there a chamber, which I that instant resolved should be my apartment, as Don Cæsar had made it his. That nobleman's bed was still there, with all the furniture; that is to say, a figured tapestry, wherein was represented the rape of the Sabines by the Romans, with chairs suitable to them. From this chamber I went into a closet, round which were cases full of books, and over them the pictures of all our monarchs. Then near the window, which opened upon a most delightful

ful country, there was an ebony escritoire, before which was a large sofa of black Morocco leather: but my attention was fixed principally upon my library. It was composed of philosophers, poets, and historians, with a great number of books of chivalry: I judged that Don Cæsar was fond of this last sort of pieces, because he had made such an ample provision of them; and I must confess to my shame, that I myself had no aversion to them, notwithstanding all the extravagancies with which they are stuffed; whether it was, that I did not then look narrowly into things, or that Spaniards are naturally too indulgent to whatever seems wonderful and surprising. I shall add nevertheless, for my justification, that I took still more delight in such books as had a moral concealed under the mask of pleasantry, and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus, became my favourite authors.

“Friend,” said I to Scipio, after I had taken a slight view of my library, “here are store of books to amuse us; but the business in hand at present is, to make a reformation in our family.” “I will spare you the trouble of that,” answered he. “During your absence, I have thoroughly studied your servants, and dare boast of knowing them to a hair. Let us begin by Mr. Joachim: I believe him an arrant rogue; and do not in the least doubt but he was turned away from the archbishop’s, for some wilful mistakes, in his arithmetic, in his bills of expences: nevertheless he must be kept, for two reasons; first, be-

cause he is an excellent cook ; and secondly, because I will always have my eyes upon him, I will watch all his actions ; and he must be very sharp indeed if he is too cunning for me. I have already told him, that you design to dismiss three parts of your domestics, and it gave him some trouble ; but nevertheless he told me, that finding in himself an inclination to serve you, he would be contented with half the wages he has at present, rather than leave you : this makes me think there is some pretty girl in this hamlet, from whom he does not care to remove. As for the under-cook," pursued Scipio, " he is a drunkard, and the porter a brute, of whom we have no need, no more than of the fellow who is hired for shooting. I can supply the place of this last very well, as I will shew you to-morrow, since we have good fowling-pieces in the house, with powder and shot. As for the footmen, there is one who is of Arragon, and seems a very honest fellow, him we will keep ; but for all the rest, they are such sad rascals, that I would not advise you to have any thing to say to them, even if you wanted a hundred footmen."

After having maturely deliberated upon all these points, we resolved to keep the cook, the scullion, and the Arragonian, and to part fairly with all the rest : this was done that very day, by the help of some pistoles which Scipio took out of our strong box, and gave them in my name. When we had made this reformation, we established order in the family, regulated the business of each servant, and

and began to live at our own expence. I could willingly have been contented with a frugal table; but my secretary, who loved ragouts and tid-bits, was not a man who would let Mr. Joachim's abilities ly dormant; on the contrary, he found them so much employment, that our dinners and suppers were like so many repasts of the votaries of Epicurus.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the loves of Gil Blas and the charming Antonia.

TWO days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, Basilio the farmer, who rented great part of the land belonging to my estate, came to my levee, and asked leave to present his daughter Antonia to me, who desired to have the honour of paying her respects to her new master. I told him it would do me abundance of pleasure, upon which he went away, and soon returned with the lovely Antonia. I believe I may venture to give that epithet to a maiden of between seventeen and eighteen, who, with the most regular features, had an incomparable complexion, and the finest eyes in the world. She was dressed in plain serge; but an admirable shape, a majestic port, and certain inexpressible graces, which do not always accompany youth, set off the plainness of her habit. She had nothing upon her head, only her hair was tied behind, and set off with flowers, after the manner of the Lacedæmonians.

When I saw her enter my chamber, I was
as

as much surpris'd at her beauty, as the knights of Charlemagne's court at the charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with an easy air, and saying obliging things to her; instead of congratulating her father upon his happiness in having such a lovely daughter; I remained astonish'd, confounded, and speechless: I could not utter a single syllable. Scipio, who observ'd my disorder, took upon him to speak for me, and was at the whole expence of the praises I ought to have bestow'd on this charming maiden. As for Antonia, who was not astonish'd at the figure I made in my nightgown and cap, she saluted me without being in the least confusion, and made me a compliment which completely enchanted me, although there was nothing in it but what was very common. Nevertheless, whilst my secretary, Basilio, and his daughter, were reciprocally exchanging compliments, I came to myself, and, as if I intend'd to atone for my stupid silence till then, pass'd from one extreme to the other; I launch'd out then into amorous discourses, and spoke to Antonia, with so much ardour and vivacity, that Basilio was alarm'd at it, and looking on me as a man, who was going to leave no stone unturn'd to debauch his daughter, he made haste to be gone with her out of my apartment, with a resolution, perhaps, to take her from my sight for ever.

Scipio, seeing himself alone with me, told me with a smile, "Here is another remedy for you against melancholy. I did not know your father had such a handsome daughter; I had never

never seen her before ; and yet I have been twice at his house. He certainly must have taken a great deal of care to keep her up close ; and I forgive him ; by St. Francis, she is a pretty bit. But," pursued he, " I believe it is not necessary to tell you that, for she struck you dumb at first with surprise." " I cannot deny it," answered I ; " ah ! my boy, I thought I saw some celestial creature : she set me all on fire in an instant : lightning is not so swift as the dart she shot into my heart."

" You overjoy me," replied my secretary, " by telling me you are fallen in love at last ; you wanted nothing but a mistress to enjoy perfect happiness in your retirement : Heaven be praised you are now provided of all manner of conveniencies. I know very well," continued he, " that we shall have some trouble to be too hard for Basilio's vigilance, but leave that to me ; I will warrant, before three days, I will procure you an interview with Antonia." " Mr. Scipio," said I, " perhaps you might chance not to be able to perform your promise, which is what I am not curious of making trial of ; I do not intend to attempt the virtue of this beauteous maiden, who seems to me to deserve my having other sentiments in her favour ; wherefore, far from requiring it of your zeal, that you should help me to dishonour her, my design is to marry her by your assistance, provided her heart is not prepossessed in behalf of another." " I did not expect," replied Scipio, " to see you take so suddenly the resolution of marrying ; all landlords in your place would not deal so honestly ;

honestly; they would have no lawful designs upon Antonia, till they had in vain tried others. As for the rest," pursued he; "do not imagine that I condemn your love, or that I have any intent to dissuade you from your design; your farmer's daughter deserves the honour you are willing to do her, if she can bring you a virgin heart, sensible of your goodness. This is what I will know this very day, by the conversation I will have with the father, and perhaps with herself.

My confidant was a man very exact in keeping his promises; he went privately to visit Basilio, and at night came to me in my closet, where I waited for him with an impatience mixed with fear. His looks were full of gaiety, from whence I drew a good omen. "If I am to believe your smiling countenance," said I, "you are come to tell me, I shall soon be possessed of the height of all my wishes." "Yes, my dear master," answered he, "every thing favours you. I have discoursed both Basilio and his daughter, and have declared to them your good intentions. The father is overjoyed at your having a desire to be his son-in-law; and I can assure you, that you are agreeable to Antonia." "O heavens!" cried I out, interrupting him, and quite transported with joy; "what, have I the good fortune to please that amiable maiden?" "Never doubt it," replied he, "she is already in love with you. I have not, indeed, drawn this confession from her mouth, but I believe it from the gaiety she discovered in her looks, when she knew your design:

design: nevertheless," pursued he, "you have a rival." "A rival!" said I hastily, turning pale. "Let not that alarm you," answered he; "this rival will never rob you of your mistress's heart; it is Mr. Joachim, your cook." "Ah! the hang-dog," said I, bursting into a laughter, "that was then the reason why he seemed so loath to leave my service." "Even so," replied Scipio; "he made a demand of Antonia in marriage, a day or two ago, and she as civilly refused him."

"With respect to your better advice be it spoken," replied I, "it would not be amiss, I think, to rid our hands of that gentleman, before he hears my design of marrying Basilio's daughter; a cook, you know, may be a dangerous rival." "You are in the right of it," said my confident; "we must clear our family of him; I will send him away to-morrow morning, before he sets about his business, and you shall have nothing more to fear, neither from his sauciness or his love. I am a little vexed, however, at parting with such a good cook; but no matter, I will sacrifice my gluttony to your security." "You need not regret his loss so much," answered I, "it is not irreparable; I will send for a cook to Valencia, who shall be as good as he." Accordingly, I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, and informed him that I wanted a cook; upon which he sent me one the very next day, who immediately comforted Scipio for Mr. Joachim's departure.

Although this zealous secretary had told me, that he perceived Antonia hugged herself,

at

at the bottom of her heart, at . . . thoughts of having made a conquest of her landlord, I durst not rely entirely upon his report; I was apprehensive he had suffered himself to be deceived by false appearances; and, in order to be more certain what I had to trust to, resolved to speak to the lovely Antonia myself. I went then directly to Basilio, and confirmed to him what my ambassador had told him. The good farmer, a downright honest man, and full of sincerity, after having heard me with great attention, assured me, it was with the utmost satisfaction he granted me his daughter; "but," added he, "do not imagine, however, that it is on account of your title of Lord of the manor; were you still only steward to the Lords of Leyva, I should prefer you to any other lover whatever that should offer himself. I have always had a great inclination for you; and all that grieves me, is, that Antonia will not bring you a large fortune." "I ask not for any," answered I, "her person is the only riches I covet." "I am your very humble servant," said he; "that is not my way of reckoning; I am no beggar, to marry my daughter at that rate. Basilio de Buentrigo, God be thanked, is able to give her a fortune; and I am resolved she shall provide you a supper, if you find her a dinner: in a word, the income of this manor is but five hundred ducats *per annum*, I will make it amount to a thousand in consideration of this marriage."

"That shall be just as you please, my dear Basilio," replied I; "we will have no disputes

utes together about interest ; we are both agreed ; nothing remains now, but to get your daughter's consent." " You have mine," said he, " that is sufficient." " Not altogether," answered I ; " as it was necessary to have yours, so it is to have hers also." " Hers depends upon mine," resumed he ; " I wish I could see her so much as open her mouth before me." " Antonia," rejoined I, " in obedience to your paternal authority, is ready, without doubt, to pay a blind submission to your orders ; but I know not, on this occasion, whether she should do it without reluctance ; and if she were never so little averse to the match, I should never forgive myself for having been the cause of her unhappiness ; in short, it is not enough for me to obtain her hand by your consent, unless her heart go along with it, and that without regret." " Oh ! my lady," cried Basilio, " I do not understand all these subtilties ; speak yourself to Antonia, and you will see she desires no better than to be your wife." Having thus said, he called his daughter, and left her with me for a moment.

To make the best of such precious time, I came directly to the point : " Beauteous Antonia," said I, " pronounce my fate ; though I have obtained your father's consent, think not I will take advantage thereof, to do violence to your inclinations ; as much happiness as I promise myself in your possession, I will renounce it if you tell me, that I shall owe it only to your obedience." " I shall take care now I say any such thing," answered she ;

“ your addressees are too agreeable to me, to give me any uneasiness, and I approve of my father’s choice, instead of being displeased with it. I know not,” continued she, “ whether I do well or ill in talking to you after this manner : but if I disliked you, I should be free enough to tell you so ; why then should I not confess to you the contrary with the same freedom ?”

At these words, which I could not hear without being in raptures, I set one knee to the ground, and in the height of my transports, taking one of her lovely hands, I kissed it with an air full of tenderness and passion. “ Charming Antonia,” said I, “ your frankness fills me with ecstacy ; go on, let nothing keep you under any restraint ; think it is your husband you are speaking to, and disclose your mind freely to him without reserve. May I then flatter myself, that you will see your fortune united to mine with pleasure ?” Basilio, who came in as I had said thus, prevented my proceeding any farther. Impatient to know what answer his daughter had made me, and fully resolved to chide her soundly, if she had expressed the least aversion to me, he made haste to rejoin us : “ Well,” said he, “ are you satisfied with Antonia ?” “ So well,” replied I, “ that I am going this very moment to make the necessary preparations for our wedding.” This said, I took leave of the father and daughter, to go and consult upon that head with my secretary.

C H A P. IX.

The nuptials of Gil Blas and the lovely Antonia; after what manner they were celebrated; what company were present at them, and with what rejoicings they were attended.

ALthough I had no need of applying to the Lords of Leyva for their leave to be married, both Scipio and myself were of opinion, that I could not, in good manners, do less, than communicate to them my intention of making Basilio's daughter my spouse; and even that I ought to ask their consent by way of compliment.

In compliance with this opinion, I went immediately to Valencia, where they were as much surpris'd to see me return so suddenly, as to hear the motive of my journey. Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, who knew Antonia very well, by having seen her more than once, congratulated me on having chosen her for my wife. Don Cæsar, especially, complimented me so highly thereupon, that had I not believed him a nobleman past certain amusements, I should have suspected him of having made some journeys to Lirias, not so much to see that little estate, as to have a glimpse of his farmer's pretty daughter.

On the other hand, Seraphina, after having assured me, she should always interest herself very much in every thing that should relate to me, told me, that she had heard great commendations of Antonia: but, pursued she, maliciously, and, as it were, to re-

proach me with the indifference with which I had repaid the love of Signiora Sephora, "If I had not heard her beauty highly extolled, I would trust to your judgment; for I know you are pretty difficult to be pleased."

Don Cæsar and his son, not content with approving of my marriage, declared they would be at the whole expence of it; bidding me return to Lirias, and stay there contented till I should hear farther from them. "Make no manner of preparation for your nuptials," said they, "we will take that care upon ourselves." Pursuant to their pleasure, I went back to my seat, and informed Basilio and his daughter of our patrons intentions; after which, we waited till we should hear from them, with as much patience as we could possibly.

Eight days, which seemed to me as many years, passed away without our receiving any news from them; to make amends, on the ninth, we saw a coach arrive, drawn by four mules, full of mantuamakers, who brought rich silks to dress the bride, and guarded by several footmen mounted likewise upon mules. One of these delivered me a letter from Don Alphonso, wherein that nobleman sent me word, that he should be with me at Lirias next day, with his father, and lady; and that the marriage-ceremony should be solemnized the morning afterwards, by the Grand Vicar of Valencia. Accordingly, Don Cæsar, with his son, and Seraphina, did not fail coming next day, with this ecclesiastic, in a coach and six horses, preceded by another with four horses,

horses, in which were Seraphina's waiting-women; and followed by the governour's guards.

Don Alphonso's lady had hardly entered the house, when she expressed an extreme impatience to see Antonia, who, on her side, no sooner knew Seraphina was arrived, than she hastened to pay her respects to her; this she did with so good a grace, that the whole company admired her. "Well, Madam," said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, "what do you think of Antonia? could Santillane make a better choice?" "No," answered Seraphina, "they are both worthy of each other; and I do not at all doubt but they will be very happy together." In short, every one praised my future spouse; but if they extolled her highly when only in plain serge, they were yet much more charmed with her, when she appeared in a richer dress. She looked as if she had never worn any other, so noble was her air, and so easy her carriage.

The joyful moment being arrived, when I was to see my fortune united to her by a happy marriage, Don Alphonso took me by the hand to lead me to the altar, whilst Seraphina did the same honour to the bride. In this order we both went to the chapel belonging to the hamlet, where the Great Vicar waited our coming, to marry us; and the ceremony was performed with the united acclamations of the inhabitants of Lirias, and all the rich farmers round about, whom Basilio had invited to the nuptials of Antonia. They brought with them their daughters, who had

F 3

dressed

dressed themselves up with ribands and flowers and had each of them tabors in their hands. We returned afterwards to the manor-house where, by the care of Scipio, the director of the feast, three tables were set out in ample order; one for the noblemen, another for their attendants; and the third, which was much the largest, for all those who had been invited. Antonia was at the first table, Seraphina insisting upon having her company there; I did the honours of the second; and Basilio seated himself at the third, with his country-neighbours. As for Scipio, he sat at neither of them, but only went from one to the other, and took care to see every one well served, and pleased.

The dinner was dressed by the governour's own cooks, which implies, that there was nothing wanting. The good wines, of which Mr. Joachim had laid in such ample provision, were lavished to profusion; the guests began to grow merry, and joy reigned every where, when a stop was put to it on a sudden, by an accident which alarmed me. My secretary being in the hall, where I was at dinner with Don Alphonso's principal officers, and Seraphina's women, fell suddenly in a swoon; I rose up to go to his assistance, and whilst I was employed in fetching him to himself, one of the women fainted away likewise. All the company rightly judged, that the sudden swooning of these two was owing to some mystery, as, in effect, it was owing to one, which was not long before it came out. For, soon after, Scipio, recovering him-

self,

self, said to me in a low voice, " Good heavens ! must the happiest of your days prove the most disagreeable of mine ? but there is no avoiding one's ill fortune," pursued he. " I have just found my wife again among Seraphina's women."

" What do I hear !" replied I ; " it is impossible ! what, are you husband to that gentlewoman who fainted away at the same time as you ?" " Yes, Sir," rejoined he, " I am her spouse, and I swear fortune could not play me a more villanous trick than to bring her again in my sight." " I know not, friend," said I, " what reasons you may have to complain of your wife ; but, whatever cause she has given you, for heaven's sake, put some constraint upon yourself at present, if you have any value for me, and do not disturb the whole company, by giving way to your resentment." " You shall have no room to complain of me," answered Scipio ; " you shall see whether I am not a good dissembler."

Having thus said, he advanced towards his spouse, whom her companions likewise had brought to herself, and, embracing her with as much ardour as if he had been really overjoyed to meet her again, " Ah ! my dear," cried he, " does heaven then bring us together once more, after a ten years separation ? O blessed moment ! the happiest of all my life !"

" I know not," said his spouse, " whether you truly rejoice at having met me ; but at least I am well assured, I never gave you any just reason to forsake me. What ! you find me

me one night with Don Fernando de Leyva who was in love with my mistress Julia, and whose passion I served; you take it in your head, that I hearken to him at the expence of my honour and yours; hereupon jealousy turns your brain; you leave Toledo, and fly me like a monster, without vouchsafing to desire me to come to an explanation upon that head: which of us two, I would fain know, has the most right to complain of the other?" "You, without doubt," answered Scipio. "Yes certainly," resumed she, "it is me. A little after your departure, Don Fernando married Julia, whom I served as long as she lived; and since an untimely death snatched her from us, I have lived with my lady her sister, who, as well as all her women, will be answerable to you for the innocence of my manners."

At this discourse, the truth whereof he could not disprove, my secretary came to a resolution with a good grace. "Once more I own my fault," said he to his wife, "and ask your pardon before all this good company." Then I interceded for him, and begged Beatrice to forget what was past, assuring her, that her husband's whole study for the future should be to make her satisfaction. She yielded to my entreaties, and all the company applauded the reunion of this long-parted pair. To celebrate it the better, they made them sit next each other at the table, and drank their healths: in short, every one congratulated them, and strove who should shew them the best treatment; so that one

one would have thought the entertainment had been made more on account of their reconciliation, than my wedding.

The company at the third table were the first who broke up; the young lads rose up to form a dance with the young lasses, who, by the noise of their tabors, soon drew about them the company of the other tables, and inspired them with the desire of following their example. Then every body was soon in motion; the governour's officers began by taking out Seraphina's women, after which the noblemen themselves joined in amongst the dancers; Don Alphonso taking out Seraphina, and dancing a faraband, and Don Cæsar another with Antonia, who came afterwards and took me out, and did not perform ill, for one who had only just learned the grounds of dancing, which she had been taught at Albarazin, at one of her relations. As for me, who, as I have already observed, had learned to dance at the Marchioness de Chaves, I passed for a famous dancer with the whole assembly. And for Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a private conversation to dancing, that they might mutually give each other an account of what had happened to them since their separation; but their discourse was interrupted by Seraphina, who having just heard of their reconciliation, had them called to her, to testify her satisfaction thereat. "Children," said she, "on this day of rejoicing, it is an additional pleasure to me, to see you two restored to each other. Friend Scipio," pursued she, "I deliver your spouse

spouse into your hands, and protest to you that her behaviour has always been irreproachable ; live here with her in a good understanding. And you, Beatrice, devote yourself to Antonia, and be no less zealous to serve her, than your husband is to please the Signior de Santillane." Scipio, after this, not being able to look upon his rib but as another Penelope, promised to have all imaginable consideration for her.

The country lads and lasses, after having danced all day, retired to their respective houses ; but the merry-making went on at my seat ; a magnificent supper was served up, and when it was time to go to rest, the Grand Vicar blessed the nuptial bed, Seraphina undressed the bride, and the Lords of Leyva did me the same honour. What was most diverting, was, that Don Alphonso's officers, and Seraphina's women, having a mind to make themselves merry, bethought themselves of performing the same ceremony by Beatrice and Scipio ; who, in order to render the scene the more comical, suffered themselves gravely to be undressed and put to bed.

CHAP. X.

The sequel of the marriage of Gil Blas and the beautiful Antonia. The beginning of the history of Scipio.

THE next day after my marriage, the Lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, first having given me a thousand fresh marks of their friendship ; so that my secretary and

remained alone, at my seat, with our spouses and servants.

The care we both of us took to please our wives was not in vain. I soon inspired my spouse with as much love for me as I had for her; and Scipio, by his good humour, soon made his forget the chagrin he had caused her. Beatrice, who was of a tractable pliant temper, insinuated herself, without difficulty, into her new mistress's good graces, and gained her confidence: in short, we all four agreed wonderfully well, and began to enjoy a fate worthy to be envied: every day passed away in the sweetest amusements. Antonia was naturally very serious, but Beatrice and I were very gay; and if we had not been so of ourselves, it was sufficient that Scipio was with us, to make it impossible for us to be melancholy. He was an incomparable man for society; one of those arch drolls, who need only make their appearance to divert a company.

Once, when we had a fancy, after dinner, to go and take our siesta in the most agreeable part of the wood, my secretary was in such a merry humour, that he banished from us all desire of sleeping, by his diverting discourse. "Hold your tongue, friend," said I, "or since you hinder us from composing ourselves to rest, tell us some tale worthy of our attention." "With all my heart, Sir," answered he. "Would you have me tell you the story of King Pelagio?" "I would rather hear your own," replied I; "but that is a pleasure you never thought proper to give me
since

since we have lived together, nor never will, as I suppose." "Why so?" said he. "If I have never related to you the history of my life, it is because you never expressed the least desire of hearing it; wherefore, it is not my fault, if you are hitherto a stranger to my adventures; and if you have ever so little a curiosity to hear them, I am ready to satisfy it whenever you please." Antonia, Beatrice, and I, took him at his word, and we disposed ourselves to hear his story, which could not fail of having a good effect upon us, either by diverting us, or by inclining us to sleep.

"I should have been son," said Scipio, "to a grandee of the first rank, or, at least, to some knight of the order of St. Jago, or of Alcantara, if that had depended upon me; but as we do not chuse our own fathers, you shall know that mine, whose name was *Torribio Scipio*, was an honest archer belonging to the holy brotherhood of St. Hermandad. As he went to and fro upon the highways, where his profession obliged him almost always to be, he met, by chance, between Cuenca and Toledo, a young gipsy, whom he thought very pretty.

"She was alone, and on foot, and carried with her all her fortune in a kind of knapsack, that hung at her back. "Where are you going with that burthen, my dear?" said he, softening his voice, which was naturally very harsh. "I am going to Toledo, Signior Cavalier," answered she, "where I hope to get my living at one thing or other in an honest way." "Your design is very

very commendable," replied he; "and I do not doubt but you have more than one string to your bow." "Yes, thank heaven," resumed she, "I have several talents; I know how to make pomatums and essences that are admirable for the ladies; I can tell fortunes, and can make the sieve turn upon the sheers, to find things lost; besides, I can shew people any thing they have a mind to see, in a looking-glass, or a glass of water."

"Torribio, judging that such a girl would be a very advantageous match for such a man as him, who found it very hard to live by his employment, although he knew admirably well how to make the most of it, proposed marrying her, and she accepted of his proposal; upon which they went, as fast as they could, to Toledo, where they were joined in matrimony: and in me you see the worthy fruits of this noble union. They settled in one of the suburbs, where my mother began to vend her pomatums and essences: but not finding this trade gainful enough, she set up for telling fortunes.

"Then it was that crowns and pistoles were seen to tumble in upon her: a thousand bubbles of both sexes soon cried up the reputation of *Coscolina*; that was the name of the gipsy, my mother. Every day one or other came to beg her to use her skill for them; sometimes it was a poor nephew wanted to know when his uncle, to whom he was sole heir, would set out for the other world; and sometimes it was a girl wanting to know, whether a cavalier, who had given her some

substantial proofs of his love, and had promised her marriage, would be as good as his word.

“ You must observe, by the way, if you please, that my mother’s predictions were always favourable to the persons who consulted her : if they happened right, so much the better ; and if they came to reproach her with it, that the very contrary of what she foretold had come to pass, she would answer coldly, that they must blame the devil ; who, notwithstanding the force of the conjurations she had made use of to oblige him to tell what would happen, had sometimes the malice to deceive her.

“ When, for the honour of her profession, my mother thought proper to make the devil appear in her operations, Torribio Scipio always acted that part, and he did it to perfection ; the natural harshness of his voice, joined to the ugliness of his face, giving him an air suitable to what he represented. If people were but endued with never so little credulity, the hideous figure my father made, was sure to frighten them. But one day, unfortunately, there came a brute of a captain, who would needs see the devil, and the moment he made his appearance, ran his sword through his body. The inquisition being informed of the devil’s death, sent their officers to Coscolina, on whom they seized, as well as on all her effects ; and I, who was then but seven years old, was put into the hospital of Los Ninos*. There were in that house

* The orphans.

some charitable ecclesiastics, who, being well paid for taking care of the poor orphans, were at the pains to teach them to read and write. They fancied they observed something in me that promised a great deal, for which reason they pitched upon me to go on their errands. They sent me into the city with their letters; I went perpetually to one place or other for them, and it was I that made the proper responses when they said mass. In gratitude to me for these little services, they undertook to teach me Latin; but they went about it too roughly, and treated me with so much severity, notwithstanding my being so serviceable to them, that, not being able to undergo it, I ran away one fine day, when I was sent on an errand; and, far from returning to the hospital, went quite out of Toledo, by the suburbs that lead to Seville.

“Although I was then hardly nine years old, I was already sensible of the pleasure of being free, and master of my own actions. It is true, I was both without money and bread; but no matter for that, I had no lessons to study, nor no themes to compose. After having walked two hours, my little legs began to refuse me any farther service; I had never before taken such long journeys, wherefore I was forced to stop to rest myself. I sat down at the foot of a tree, that bordered upon the highway; and there, to amuse myself, took out my accidence which happened to be in my pocket, and ran it over in play; but afterwards, remembering the many strokes with

G 2

the

the ferula, and whippings it had made me suffer, I tore out all the leaves, and cried out in a great passion, " Ah ! thou dog of a book, thou shalt make me shed no more tears." Whilst I was thus satisfying my revenge, in strewing the ground about me with declensions, conjugations, moods, and tenses, &c. there passed that way a hermit with a long white beard, a large pair of spectacles on his nose, and a very venerable air.

" He drew near me ; and if he observed me very attentively, I examined him also from head to foot. " My little man," said he to me with a smile, " methinks we have both been eyeing each other very tenderly, and should not do amiss to live together in my hermitage, which is not above two hundred paces from hence." " I am your humble servant," answered I pretty roughly. " I have no manner of mind to turn hermit." At this reply, the good old man burst into a fit of laughter, and, embracing me, said, " My habit, son, ought not to make you afraid; though it is not agreeable, it is profitable : it makes me lord of a charming retreat, and of the neighbouring villages, whose inhabitants love, or rather idolize me. Come along with me," pursued he, " I will put on you a habit like mine. If you like it, you shall share with me in the pleasures of the life I lead ; and if you cannot away with it, I will not only give you free liberty to be gone, but you may depend upon it, that at your parting, I will not fail to do you some good."

" I suffered myself at last to be persuaded by him,

him, and followed the old hermit, who asked me several questions, which I answered with a sincerity which I have not always carried since. On our arrival at the hermitage, he gave me some fruit which I devoured greedily, having eaten nothing all day, but a mouthful of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted at the hospital. The anchorite seeing me ply my jaws so well, said, "Courage, my boy, do not spare my fruit; thank Heaven I have a sufficient quantity thereof: I did not bring you here to let you die with hunger." This was very true; for, about an hour after our arrival, he kindled a fire, spitted a leg of mutton; and, whilst I turned the spit, set out a little table, on which he laid a napkin that was pretty dirty, and two plates, (one for him, and the other for me,) with knives, forks, &c.

"When the meat was ready, he drew it off the spit, and cut off some pieces for our supper, which was not a horse's meal, since we drank some excellent wine, of which he had also good store. "Well, my chicken," said he, when he had risen from table, "are you contented with my commons? Thus you shall be treated every day, if you will stay with me. As for the rest, you shall only do what you please in this hermitage. All I shall require of you is, that you accompany me every time I go a-questing in the neighbouring villages; you will serve to lead a little ass with two panniers, which the charitable country-folks usually fill with eggs, bread, meat, and fish: this is all I desire of you." "I will do any thing

you please," said I, "provided you will not oblige me to learn Latin." Friar Chrysofom (that was the hermit's name) could not help laughing at my sincerity, and assured me anew, that he did not design to force my inclinations.

"We went a-questing the very next day with the little ass, which I led by the halter, and we made a plentiful harvest; every country man taking pleasure to put something into our panniers. One threw in a whole loaf, another a great piece of bacon, a third a goose stuffed, and a fourth a partridge. What shall I say? we carried home more provisions than was sufficient for a week, which plainly shewed the esteem and love those country-folks had for the friar. It is true, he was very serviceable to them; he gave them advice, whenever they came to ask it; he made peace in the families that were at variance, and married the young maidens. Besides this, he had remedies for a thousand different distempers, and had particular prayers, of wonderful virtue, which he taught such women as were desirous of having children.

"You find, by what I have already told you, that I was well fed in my hermitage; and my bed was not much worse than my fare; stretched out at my ease upon good clean straw, with a soft cushion under my head; though the covering was but a coarse woollen stuff, and a good warm quilt of the same stuff to cover me, I slept soundly every night, without ever once waking: and Friar Chrysofom, who had promised me a hermit's dress,

dress, made me one accordingly out of his old habits, and gave me the name of *little Friar Scipio*. Being thus equipped, as soon as I appeared in the villages in this garb, every one thought me so genteel, that the little ass was yet heavier laden than before; all striving who should give most to the little friar, so much pleasure they took in seeing me in that dress.

“The idle and lazy life I led with this hermit, could not fail of being agreeable to a boy of my age; accordingly, I took so much pleasure in it, that I should always have followed it, if the fates had not allotted me a quite different fortune: but my destiny soon tore me from this luxurious lazy life, and made me leave Friar Chrysoptom after the manner I am going to relate.

“I often saw this old hermit work at the cushion which served him for a pillow; he did nothing but unrip it and sew it up again; and I observed one day that he put some silver in it. This observation was followed by a strong curiosity to see what treasure was therein: which curiosity I resolved to satisfy the first time he went to Toledo, whither he used constantly to go once a-week. I waited for that day with great impatience, though without any other design, at that time, than to satisfy my curiosity. At last the good man set out, and I unripped his pillow, when I found therein, to the value of fifty crowns, in all sorts of pieces, concealed amongst the wool with which it was filled.

“This treasure, in all probability, was the
fruits

fruits of the gratitude of those country men whom the hermit had cured by his remedies, and of those women who had found the good effects of his prayers in making them fruitful. However that be, I no sooner saw that it was money, which I might securely convert to my own use, than I began to discover myself of the true gipsy-breed. I had a strong desire to steal it; which could only be ascribed to the force of the blood that ran in my veins. I gave way, without resistance, to the temptation; wherefore, putting up the money in a bag, where we used to put our combs and night-caps, pulling off my hermit's habit, and dressing me again in my orphan's clothes, I made the best of my way from the hermitage, imagining I had got the treasures of both the Indies in my bag.

“ You have just heard my first trial of skill,” continued Scipio, “ and I doubt not but you expect to find it followed by a series of exploits of the same nature. I shall not balk your expectation; I have several more pranks of the same nature to relate to you, before I come to my laudable actions; but I shall come to them at last, and you will find by my relation, that a rogue may very possibly become an honest man.

“ As much a child as I was, I was not fool enough to take the road to Toledo; that would have been running the hazard of meeting Friar Chrysoptom, who would have made me restore his hoard, very much to my dissatisfaction. I took another road then, which led to a village, called *Galves*; there I stopt
at

At an inn, the landlady whereof was a widow about forty years of age, who was endued with all the qualities requisite to make the best of her business. This honest woman (as will be seen in the sequel) had no sooner set her eyes on me, than judging by my clothes, that I was a runaway from the orphans hospital, she asked me who I was, and whither I was going?" I answered her, "that, having lost both my father and mother, I was going in search of a place." "Can you read, child?" said she. I assured her, that I could not only read, but that I could write a very good hand; in effect, I could make my letters, and even join them together after a fashion; so that it looked like writing; and that was enough for the business of a country-tavern. "I will take you then into my service," answered the landlady; "you will be of great use to me, and shall keep a register of all my debts, both active and passive. I shall give you no wages," continued she, "because this inn is frequented by a good set of company, who do not forget the servants: you may depend upon good vales."

"I accepted of her offer, reserving to myself, as you may well believe, the privilege of changing my quarters, as soon as ever the air of Galves should be found not agreeable to my constitution. As soon as I saw myself fixed in this place, I was immediately perplexed with a great uneasiness upon my spirits. I was not willing it should be known I had money; and I was at a great loss to know where to conceal it, so as it should be safe from

from any strange hands. I was not yet well enough acquainted with the house, to trust in those places that seemed to me the properest to hide it. What troubles do riches cause ! I resolved, at last, however, to put my bag in a corner of our hay-loft, among some straw and thinking it securer there than any where else, I made myself as easy upon that head as was possible.

“ My mistress had, in all, three servants ; a lusty lad to look after the stables, a young Galician wench, and myself. Each of us made as much as we could, of the travellers that stopped at our inn : I always got some small money from them when I carried in the reckoning ; they used also to give something to the hostler, for taking care of their beasts ; but for the young Galician, who was the idol of the muleteers who passed that way, she got more crowns than we did maravedis. No sooner did I receive a penny, but I carried it directly to the hay-loft, to add to my treasure ; and the more I saw my riches increase the more I found my little heart set upon them : sometimes I used even to kiss my money, and contemplated it with such raptures as none but misers can comprehend : in short the love I had for my treasure, used to make me visit it above forty times a-day.

“ In so doing, I frequently met my mistress upon the stairs ; who being naturally very mistrustful, was curious to know what could draw me every moment to the hay-loft. Accordingly, she went thither, and began to fret about every where, imagining I might per-

perhaps conceal there some things that I purloined from her. In making this general search, she did not forget to remove the straw that covered my bag, which, at last, she found. She immediately untied it; and seeing there several crowns and pistoles, she believed, rather pretended to believe, that I had stolen that money from her. She seized it then without any scruples; after which, calling me little rascal, and little knave, she ordered the postler, who was entirely devoted to her will, to give me fifty good lashes with a horse-whip; and after having curried my hide so soundly, turned me out of doors, saying, "she would not suffer any rogues in her house." It was in vain I protested that I had not robbed my mistress; she affirmed the contrary, and even one believed her sooner than me: thus did the rich Chrysoptom's treasure pass from the hand of a thieving knave, into those of a pilfering slut.

"I lamented the loss of my money, as one laments the loss of an only son; and though my tears did not avail to recover me what I had been wronged of by that cheat of my mistress, they at last excited the compassion of some persons who saw me crying. Among those was the curate of Galves, who happened by chance to pass that way, and seeming moved with my sorrowful condition, took me home with him to the parsonage-house. There, to win my good opinion, or rather to pump me, he began to commiserate my hard fortune: 'How much this poor child is to be pitied!' said he; 'is it at all to be wondered at, if being left

left to himself, at such a tender age, he had been guilty of an ill action? even when men grown, have much ado to abstain from the same, during the whole course of our lives. Then addressing himself to me, "From what part of Spain do you come, child?" pursued he; "and what are your parents? you look like a boy of a creditable family; speak on with a good courage, and depend upon it I will not forsake you."

"The curate, by this artful and charitable discourse, induced me insensibly to discover to him all my affairs, which I did with abundance of ingenuity: I concealed nothing from him. Having heard all very attentively, "Though it is not at all decent, my boy," said he, "for hermits to hoard up money that does not take away from your fault: in robbing Friar Chrysoptom, you have nevertheless sinned against that article of the decalogue, which says, Thou shalt not steal; but I will take upon myself to oblige the innkeeper to restore the money, and to have it remitted to the friar in his hermitage; you may, from this moment, set your conscience at rest upon that score." That, I will swear to you, was, what never gave me the least uneasiness. But the curate, who had a design in his head, did not stop there: "I am under some concern for you, child," pursued he, "and will provide you a good place; I will send you to-morrow morning, by a muleteer to my nephew, who is canon of the cathedral at Toledo, and will not refuse, at my request to receive you into the number of his foot-boys

boys. They all live like so many priests, that have a fat benefice ; you will do perfectly well there, I can assure you."

" This assurance was so comfortable to me, that I no longer remembered either my lost treasure, or my horse-whipping ; all my thoughts ran only on the pleasure of living like a fat priest. Next morning, whilst I was at breakfast, a muleteer arrived at the parsonage, by the curate's orders, with two mules saddled and bridled. They helped me upon one of them, the muleteer leaped upon the other, and we set out on the road to Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a man of a jovial temper, who desired no better than to divert himself at his neighbour's expence : " My little gentleman," said he, " you have an excellent friend in the curate of Galves. He could not give you a better proof of his affection, than in placing you with his nephew, the canon, whom I have the honour to know, and who is, beyond dispute, the jewel of his chapter : he is not one of those devout gentry, whose pale meagre countenances preach up mortification ; he has a good jolly face, a fresh complexion, and a jovial look ; in short, he is a man who does not refuse any pleasure that offers, and who, above all things, loves good cheer. You will live in his house like a sow in beans."

" The hang-dog of a muleteer, perceiving that I listened to him with abundance of satisfaction, went on in extolling the happiness I should enjoy when in the canon's service, and never ceased talking of it till we arrived at the

village, named *Obisa*, where we stopt to give our mules a little rest. As luck would have it, the muleteer, in going up and down the inn, by chance let a paper fall out of his pocket, which I had the address to pick up without his taking notice of it, and found the means to read, whilst he was busy in the stable. It was a letter to the priests of the orphan hospital: the contents were as follows.

GENTLEMEN,

I Thought charity obliged me to put again into your hands a young rogue, who has run away from your hospital; he seems to me not to want wit, and to deserve your having the goodness to keep him safe. I doubt not, but, by frequent correction, you will make him at last a hopeful lad. Heavens preserve your Reverences, and prosper your pious and charitable endeavours.

Your sincere wellwisher,

THE CURATE OF GALVES.

“When I had done reading this letter, which informed me of the curate’s good intentions, I was not a minute at a loss what course to take: getting out of the inn, and running to the banks of the *Tagus*, above a league from thence, was but the work of one moment. Fear lent me wings to fly the priests of the orphan hospital, to which I was absolutely resolved never to return, so much was I disgusted with their way of teaching Latin.

“I made no stop till I got to *Toledo*; and being arrived there, entered the city with as much

much cheerfulness, as if I had known where to go directly to fill my belly : it is true, it is a blessed place ; and one, where a man of wit, who is forced to leave at another's expence, need not fear dying with hunger. I had hardly got to the Great Square, when a gentleman well dressed, whom I passed close by, pulled me by the arm, and said, " Little boy, will you serve me ? I should be very glad to have such a foot-boy as you : " " And I to have such a master, as you," answered I. " If it be so," replied he, " you shall be mine from this moment, and need only follow me directly ;" which I did without making any reply.

" This gentleman, who might be about thirty years old, and whose name was Don Abel, lodged in a very handsome apartment, which he hired ready furnished. He was a gamester by profession, and this was the way we lived together. In the morning I cut him very small, as much tabacco as would fill five or six pipes : I then cleaned his clothes, and fetched him a barber to shave him, and turned up his mustachios ; after which he went out, ran from one tennis-court to another, and never returned home till between eleven and twelve at night. But every morning before he went abroad, he took out of his pocket three reals, which he gave me to bear my expences each day, leaving me at liberty to do what I pleased till ten o'clock ; for, provided I was at our lodgings when he came home, he was very well satisfied with me. I should have observed before, that he had a handsome li-

very made for me, with which I looked very much like a little factor to the ladies of pleasure : I was highly delighted with my condition, and certainly could never have found one more agreeable to my humour.

“ I had already led this happy life almost a month, when my master asked me, if I was contented with his service ; and upon my answering, that I was as well pleased as possible : “ Well then,” said he, “ we will set out to-morrow for Seville, whither my affairs call me : you will not be dissatisfied with seeing this capital of Andalusia. *He who has not seen Seville, says the proverb, has seen nothing.*

“ I told him I was ready to follow him anywhere. Accordingly, that very day, the Seville carrier came to our lodgings, and took away a large trunk which held all my master's clothes, and the next morning we set out for Andalusia.

“ My master Don Abel was so fortunate a player, that he never lost but when he pleased himself ; this obliged him often to shift his quarters, to avoid the resentment of those he had bubbled ; and this was the cause of this our journey to Seville. Being arrived at that city, we again took ready-furnished lodgings in a house not far from the gate that leads to Cordova, and began to live in the same manner as at Toledo. But my master found a vast difference between these two cities ; he met with gamesters at Seville, who played full as well at tennis, as himself, and with as good fortune ; insomuch that he came home sometimes very melancholy.

“ One

"One morning in particular, when he was still in an ill humour, on account of his having lost an hundred pistoles the day before, he asked me, why I had not carried his foul linen to a woman who used to wash and perfume it? I answered him, that it never came to my memory; upon which he flew into a passion, and gave me half a dozen slaps on the face, laid on so home, that he made me see more lights than ever were in the temple of Solomon: "Take that, you little rascal," said he, "to teach you to be more mindful of your business for the future. Must I be always after you to tell you what you have to do? why are you not as ready at your business as at your victuals? cannot you, since you are no fool, prevent my orders, and do what is necessary to be done, without bidding?" At these words, he went out of his apartment, where he left me very much mortified, at having received so many slaps on the face for so small a fault.

"I do not know what adventure befel him not long after, in a tennis-court; but one night he came home in a very great heat: "Scipio," said he, "I am resolved to take a trip to Italy, and shall embark after to-morrow, on board a vessel that is returning to Genoa; I have my reasons for going this voyage. I believe you will be willing to bear me company, and take advantage of such a fine opportunity, to see the most delicious country in the world." I made answer, that the offer was very agreeable to me; but at the same time determined within myself to

play least in fight, at the very moment we were to go on board. I thought I should be thereby revenged on him, and fancied my design very ingenious. I was so highly delighted with it, that I could not forbear communicating it to a bully by profession, whom I happened to meet in the street; for I had got acquainted with some loose companions since my coming to Seville, and chiefly with the bully before mentioned. I told him the first, in what manner, and why I had been beaten; after which, I informed him of my design to leave Don Abel in the lurch, when he was upon the point of embarking, and then asked him, what he thought of my resolution.

“The bravo bent his brows as he heard me, and turned up his mustachios, then blaming my master with great gravity: “Little gentleman,” said he, “you are a lad dishonoured for ever, if you are satisfied with the trifling revenge you at present resolve on: it is not enough to let Don Abel set out for Italy by himself; that would not be punishment enough: you must proportion your revenge to the greatness of the offence. Let us rob him of his clothes and money, which we will share afterwards, like brothers, when he is gone. Although I had a natural inclination to stealing, I was startled at the proposal of a robbery of this importance. Nevertheless, the arch thief, who proposed it to me, did not leave me till he had persuaded me to it; and pray observe what was the success of our hopeful enterprise.

“The

"The bully, who was a large robust man, came to me next evening, just at the close of day, to our lodgings; I shewed him the trunk in which my master had already packed up his clothes, and asked him if he alone could carry a trunk of such great weight. "So great a weight!" said he; "know, that when it is to carry off any thing of another man's, I would run away even with Noah's ark." Accordingly, having thus said, he went to the trunk, took it without difficulty upon his shoulders, and went down stairs very nimbly. I followed him that instant; and we were just going out at the street-door, when Don Abel, whom his propitious stars brought thither so fortunately for him, appeared before us on a sudden.

"Where are you going with that trunk?" said he to me. I was so confounded, that I stood quite speechless; and the bravo, finding we had missed our aim, threw down the trunk upon the ground, and betook himself to his heels, to avoid coming to an explanation. "Whither were you going then with that trunk?" said my master to me a second time. "Sir," answered I, more dead than alive, "I was going to have it carried on board the vessel, in which you are to embark to-morrow for Italy." "Ay, Sir!" replied he; "do you know then which is the vessel I am to go in?" "No, Sir," rejoined I, "but whoever has a tongue may go to Rome. I should have inquired at the harbour, and somebody or other would have told me."

"At this answer, which created in him
great

great suspicion of me, he gave me a furious look ; and I thought he was going to threaten me again. " Who bid you," said he, " have my trunk carried out of this house ?" Yourself, Sir," answered I. " Is it possible that you can have forgot how you reproached me the other day ? did not you tell me, when you cuffed me, that you would have me prevent your orders, and do of my own accord whatever was to be done for your service ? Accordingly, it was in compliance with this injunction, that I was going to have your trunk carried to the vessel." On my saying this, the gamester taking notice that I had more roguery in me than he had imagined, dismissed me his service that instant, and added with a grave air : " Go, Mr. Scipio, heaven be your guide ; I do not love to play with such persons as have sometimes a card too few, and sometimes one too many. Get you out of my sight," pursued he, in another tone, " for fear I should make you dance without a fiddle."

" I spared him the labour of bidding me begone twice ; I got away from him in an instant, being ready to die for fear he should make me pull off my clothes, which by great good fortune he left me. As I went along the streets, studying where to get a lodging, with only two reals, which was all my treasure, I arrived at the gate of the Archbishop's palace : and as supper was then getting ready for his Grace, there came such an agreeable smell out of the kitchen, that a good nose might have scented it at a league's distance.

" Adsfish !"

"Adsfish!" said I to myself, "I could very willingly make a shift with one of these ragouts that take me by the nose; I would be satisfied with only dipping in my four fingers and my thumb. But let me consider! is it impossible to contrive some way, to taste this delicious victuals, of which I can now smell only the steam? Why not? it does not seem to me impracticable." Upon this I put my wits upon the rack, and after studying for some time, a stratagem came into my head, which I immediately put in execution, and which proved successful. I ran into the court-yard of the archiepiscopal palace, and directing my steps towards the kitchen, cried out as loud as ever I could, "Help, help, for the Lord's sake!" as if somebody had pursued me to kill me.

"On my repeated cries, Master Diego, the Archbishop's head-cook, ran out with three or four scullions, to know the reason of such an outcry, and seeing no body but me, asked why I called out in that manner for help. "Ah, Sir," answered I, "with the signs of one heartily frightened, "I conjure you, by St. Polycarp, to save me from the fury of a bully that wants to kill me." "Where is this bully?" said Diego; "you are alone, I do not see so much as a cat at your heels." "Go, child, go home, and do not fear any thing; it was certainly somebody that had a mind to divert himself, by putting you in a fright; and he did very well not to follow you hither, for we should at least have cut off both his ears." "No, no," answered I, "it was

was not one that run after me in jest; it was a great rogue who wanted to strip me, and am sure he is still waiting for me in the street. "He shall wait for you then a good while," said the cook; "for you shall stay here to-morrow; you shall both sup here, and here."

"I was transported with joy, on hearing these last words; and it was a delightful sight to me, when being conducted into the kitchen by Master Diego, I saw the preparations for his Grace's supper. I reckoned up fifteen persons that were employed about it, but could not number all the dishes that I saw before me, so well had Providence taken care to provide for the archbishop's family. Then it was that having the full scent of the ragouts which I had before only smelt at a distance, I began to understand high living. I had the honour then to sup and ly that night with the scullions; into whose favour I insinuated myself so far, that next day when I went to thank Master Diego, for having so generously afforded me refuge, he said to me, "Our scullions have all told me, they should be overjoyed to have you for their companion, they are so highly delighted with your good humour; on the other hand, would you be willing to be their comrade?" I answered, That if I were once so happy, I should think myself at the height of my wishes. "Since it is so, friend," resumed he, "look upon yourself from this moment as one of the officers of the archbishop's family." Having thus said, he took me with him, and presented

ed me to the major-domo, who, by my brightly look, judged me worthy of being received into the number of the lick-dishes.

“ No sooner was I in possession of this so honourable employment, but Master Diego, according to the laudable custom of cooks of great houses, who always send plenty of provision secretly to their favourites, chose me out, to carry to a gentlewoman in the neighbourhood, sometimes loins of veal, sometimes wild fowls, and sometimes tame. This good lady was a widow about thirty years of age, very handsome, and very sprightly; and one who looked very much, as if she was not strictly faithful to her kind provider. Master Diego, however, was not contented with supplying her with meat, bread, sugar, and oil; he likewise sent her in good store of wine: and all this was at the expence of his Grace the Archbishop.

“ I completely shook off dulness in his Grace’s palace, where I played a pretty arch prank, which is still very much talked of at Seville. The pages, and some other domestics, in order to celebrate the anniversary of the archbishop’s birthday, bethought themselves of acting a play. They pitched upon that of Benavidez, and as they wanted a boy of my age, to represent the young King of Leon, they cast their eyes upon me. The major-domo, who valued himself upon being a master of oratory, took upon himself to instruct me; and, after having given me some lessons, averred I should not be the worst actor in the company.

“ As

“As his Grace was at the whole expense of the entertainment, no cost was spared to render it magnificent; a stage was built up in the largest hall in the palace, which wanted for no decorations. Amongst the rest, a bed of green-turf was prepared between the fictitious scenes, upon which I was to appear sleeping when the Moors should come to take me prisoner. The actors having all got their parts ready before the day appointed, the archbishop did not fail to invite all the persons of the best fashion of both sexes in that city to be present at the representation.

“That day being come, each actor was wholly taken up with the thoughts of his dress; as for mine, it was brought me by a taylor, accompanied by our major-domo, who having given himself the trouble to hear me rehearse my part, took a pleasure in seeing his pupil set off to the best advantage. The taylor then put on me a robe of blue velvet trimmed with a rich gold lace, and buttons of the same, and set off with a large sleeve whose cuffs were weighed almost down to the ground, by a broad fringe of the same metal. This done, the major-domo himself placed a crown upon my head, which, though made of pasteboard, was covered over with fine pearl, intermixed with a number of false diamonds. Besides this, they put on me a rose-coloured silk girdle with silver flowers; and every addition they made to my dress, they thought they were fastening me on wings to fly away with, and be gone.

“In a word, the play began about the

clo

of day ; I opened the scene with a long speech in verse, which concluded with saying, "That not being able to keep myself from the harms of sleep, I was going to give way to pleasing violence." Having thus said, I retired behind the scenes, and laid me down upon the turf-bed that was there prepared for me. But instead of sleeping there, I began to consider how I should get to the street, and walk off with my royal robes. A little pair of back-stairs which went under the stage, and into the hall, seemed to me very proper for the execution of my design. I got up then nimbly, and finding nobody observed me, ran down the stairs into the hall, got to the door, and cried, "Make way, make way, I am going to change my dress." Upon this every one fell back, to give me room ; so that, in less than two minutes, I got safe out of the palace, and ran to the house of the bully before mentioned, my acquaintance.

"He was surprised to the last degree, to see me in such a magnificent dress ; but I soon recovered him from it, by telling him the whole story, at which he laughed heartily. Then embracing me with so much the more joy, because he flattered himself with the hopes of sharing in the King of Leon's spoils, he congratulated me on my having done such a notable exploit, and told me, if I did not degenerate for the time to come, I should one day make some noise in the world by my ingenuity.

"After having diverted ourselves highly, and dispelled the spleen, I asked the bravo,

what we should do with my rich habit? "Let not that trouble you," said he; "I know an honest broker, who, without expressing the least curiosity, buys any thing that is offered him, provided he can find his own account therein; I will go to him to-morrow morning, and bring him hither to you." Accordingly, next day the bravo went out very early in the morning, leaving me in bed, and returned two hours afterwards with the broker, who had under his arm a bundle, wrapped up in a yellow cloth.

"Friend," said he to me, "I have here brought you Signior Ybagnez of Segovia who, notwithstanding the ill example of his brethren, piques himself upon being a man of the most scrupulous integrity: he will immediately tell you to a maravedi the worth of the clothes you have a mind to part with, and you may trust to his valuation." "Oh! for that matter," says this saint of a broker, "I should be a sad villain indeed, to rate things at less than their full value; that is what Ybagnez of Segovia has never yet been reproached with, God be thanked, and what he never shall be reproached with. Let us see a little," pursued he, "the clothes you have a mind to sell; I will tell you on my conscience, the full worth of them." "Here they are," said the bravo, holding them out to him; "confess truly that nothing can be more magnificent; observe well the beauty of this Genoese velvet, and the richness of these trimmings."

"I am charmed with them to the last degree,"

agree," answered the conscientious broker, after having examined the clothes with the greatest attention; "nothing can be finer." "And what think you of the pearls that adorn this crown?" resumed my pretended friend. "If they were something rounder," said Ybagnez, "they would be inestimable, and I am as well pleased with them as the rest. I tell the truth honestly," continued he; "a rogue of a broker in my place, would affect to despise the goods, on purpose to have them at a low price, and would not be ashamed to offer you but twenty pistoles; but I, who am a man of honour, will give you forty for them."

"Had Ybagnez said a hundred, he would not have been a just appraiser, since the pearls alone were well worth two hundred; nevertheless, the bravo, who had an understanding with him, cried out, "See how fortunate you are, to fall into the hands of such an honest man. Signior Ybagnez values things as if he were to die the next moment." "That is very true," said the broker; "accordingly, I am always at a word, never bate a farthing of what I ask, or give a doit more than I bid at first. Well," pursued he, "is it a bargain? shall I tell out the money?" Stay a little," said my hopeful acquaintance, "my little friend must first try on the clothes I made you bring here for him; I am much mistaken if they do not fit him to a hair." Then the broker, untying his bundle, shewed me a suit of clothes, which was indeed of a fine dark-coloured cloth, with silver buttons, but half

worn out. I got up to try on this rare purchase ; which, when I had done, although was but too long and too big for me, the gentlemen vowed it looked as if it had been made on purpose, it fitted me so exactly. Ybaguez valued them at ten pistoles, and, as he was always at a word, I was obliged to submit to it : infomuch that he pulled out his purse, told out thirty pistoles upon the table and then bundled up my royal robes and crown, and walked off with them.

As soon as he was gone, says the bully to me, very gravely, " I am mighty well satisfied with this broker : " and indeed he had reason so to be ; for I am sure he had at least a hundred pistoles of him, for helping him to such a bubble. However, not satisfied with that, he took, without any ceremony, half the money upon the table ; and, leaving me the other, " My dear Scipio, " pursued he, " with these fifteen pistoles remaining, I advise you immediately to make all the haste imaginable out of this city, where you may easily judge that a narrow search will be made for you by his Grace the Archbishop's order. I should be mortified to the last degree, after your having signalised yourself by an action that will do honour to your history, to have you foolishly run yourself into a prison. " I answered, that I had resolved from the first to leave Seville as soon as possible, as, in effect, I did, after having bought a hat and some shirts ; steering my course along that vast and delicious country, which leads between numberless vineyards and olive trees, to the ancient city

city of Carmona, and three days after I arrived at Cordova.

"I took up my lodging at an inn, just at the entrance into the Great Square that is inhabited by the merchants, and gave myself out for a young lad of a good family at Toledo, who was travelling for his pleasure. I was well enough dressed not to have this suspected as false; and some pistoles which I took care to let my landlord see, as it were, by chance, fully persuaded him that it was true. Perhaps also, my tender years might make him think me some young libertine, who was roving about after having robbed his parents.

"However that be, he did not seem curious to know any more of me than I was willing to tell him, for fear, probably, that his curiosity should oblige me to change my lodging. For six reals a-day a man might live very well in this inn, which was generally frequented by a pretty deal of company. I reckoned up twelve persons at supper that night. What is most diverting is, that every body polished his jaws very strenuously, without saying so much as a word, excepting one man, whose tongue running perpetually at random, made amends by its chattering for the silence of the rest. He set up for a wit, told abundance of stories, and racked his brains for jests to divert the company, who indeed every now and then would burst into a laughter; but in reality not so much to applaud his flights, as in derision of them.

"As for my part, I took so little notice of this original's discourse, that I should have

risen from dinner, without being able to give the least account of it, if he had not found the means to interest me therein: "Gentlemen," said he, just as we had dined, "I reserve for the last bit one of the most diverting stories in the world; it is of an adventure that happened not many days ago at the Archbishop's palace at Seville: I had it from a bachelor of my acquaintance, who says he was an eye-witness thereof." These words gave me some uneasiness; I did not in the least doubt but this was my adventure; nor was I deceived: he gave an exact account thereof and even informed me of what I was before a stranger to, *viz.* what happened in the Archbishop's palace after my flight, which was as follows:

"I had not made my escape many minutes, when the Moors, who, according to the play, were to carry me off, came upon the stage, with design to surprise me upon my turf-bed, where they thought to find me counterfeiting sleep; but when they would have rushed upon his Majesty of Leon, they were infinitely surprised to see neither King nor Kern. Immediately the play was at a stand; all the actors are in confusion: one calls me, another runs every where to look for me; a third makes a horrid outcry; a fourth wishes me with ten thousand devils; when the archbishop perceiving there was some strange disorder and uproar behind the scenes, called out to know the reason. On hearing his Grace's voice, a page, who played the part of Gracioso, came out, and said,

"You

You need not fear, my Lord, the Moors taking the King of Leon prisoner, he has just made his escape with his royal robes." "Heaven be praised!" answered the Archbishop, he has done perfectly well, to run from the enemies of our religion, and get away from the chains they were preparing for him: he is returned, no doubt, to Leon, the capital of his kingdom; may he arrive there without any sinister accident. As for the rest, I forbid any one to pursue him; I should be very sorry to have his Majesty receive any mortification on my account. Having thus said, the prelate ordered them to read my part, and to go on with the play."

C H A P. XI.

The sequel of the history of Scipio.

AS long as my money lasted, my landlord shewed me abundance of respect; but the moment he perceived I had scarce any left, he grew very cold, picked a sleeveless quarrel with me, and desired me one fair morning to get out of his house. Accordingly, I walked off very haughtily, and went into the church of the Dominican friars, where, whilst I was hearing mass, an old beggar came and asked my charity. I took two or three maravedis out of my pocket, which I gave him, saying, "Beg of God, friend, that he would help me to find soon a good place; if your prayers are heard, you shall not repent it; depend upon it, I will not be ungrateful."

At these words, the beggar looked upon
me

me very attentively, and answered with grave air, "What sort of place would you wish to have?" "To be a foot-boy," replied I, "in some good family." He asked me then, if the thing required haste? "As much as possible," said I; "for if I have not the good luck to be provided very soon, there is no help for it, I must either starve, or become one of your brethren." "If you should be reduced to that necessity," resumed he, "it would be very grievous to you, who are not used to our way of life; but if you was never so little accustomed to it, you would prefer our condition to that of a servant, which, without dispute, is inferior to beggary. Nevertheless, since you would rather go to service, than lead, like me, a free and independent life, you should be provided for immediately. As poor as you see me, I can be serviceable to you; be here to-morrow at the same hour."

I took care not to fail, but went thither next morning to the same place, where I was not long before I saw the beggar, who came up to me, and desired me to take the pains to follow him. I did so, and he conducted me to a cellar, not far from the church, which served him for his abode. We went both down into the subterraneous dwelling, and seating ourselves upon a long bench, which was at least an hundred years old, he broke silence, as follows: *A good action*, as the proverb says, *never goes unrewarded*; you gave me alms yesterday, and that determined me to procure you a place, and that very soon, if

it

please the Lord. I know an old Dominican, named *Father Alexis*, who is a holy man, and a great director: I have the honour to be employed by him on several occasions; and I perform what he requires of me with so much discretion and fidelity, that, in return, he does not refuse to use his interest for me, or for my friends. I have mentioned you to him, and engaged him to serve you; I will accordingly present you to his Reverence when you please."

"There is no time to be lost," said I to the old beggar; "let us go directly to this good father." The poor man consented, and carried me forthwith to Father Alexis, whom we found in his chamber, writing spiritual letters. He immediately left off his writing to speak to me, and told me, that at the beggar's request he was willing to use his interest for me. "Having heard," pursued he, "that Signior Balthasar Velasquez wants a foot-boy, I have written to him this morning on your behalf, and he has just sent me for answer, that he will receive you implicitly on my recommendation; you may go to him, therefore, this very day in my name; he is my penitent, and my friend. Hereupon the good father exhorted me for three quarters of an hour, to be careful in discharging my duty faithfully: he expatiated chiefly upon the obligation I was under to serve Velasquez with zeal; after which he assured me he would take care to keep me in my place, provided my master had nothing to lay to my charge.

After

After thanking the friar for his goodness to me, I went out of the monastery with the beggar, who told me, that Signior Balthazar Velasquez was an old woollen-drapeer, a good natured downright honest man, and in plentiful circumstances. "I do not at all doubt," added he, "but you will do perfectly well in his house." I asked then the way to the drapeer's, and went thither directly, after having promised the beggar to be grateful for his good offices, as soon as ever I should be settled in my place. Being come to the shop, which was very spacious, I found two journeymen well dressed, walking to and fro, and giving themselves the airs of smart fellows, till customers should come in. I asked them if the master of the house was within, and told them, I had a message for him from Father Alexis. On hearing which venerable name, they made me walk into a back-shop, where the drapeer was looking over a great debt-book in his counting-house. I saluted him respectfully, and told him, I was the young lad Father Alexis had recommended to him for a foot-boy. "Ah! child," said he, "you are welcome; it is sufficient you are sent me by that good man; I shall hire you preferably to three or four others that are proposed to me; it is a thing agreed on, your wages shall go on from this day."

I had no need to be long with this good drapeer, to perceive that the character given me of him was very just; he even seemed to me an Israelite without guile, so very downright honest, that I could not help thinking

it would cost me a good deal of pains to forgive him for playing him some trick. He had been a widower four years, and had two children; a son about five and twenty, and a daughter about eleven. The latter being brought up by a severe duenna, and directed by Father Alexis, walked in the paths of virtue; but Gaspard Velasquez, her brother, though no cost had been spared to make him an honest man, was guilty of all the vices of an abandoned young libertine. He would sometimes stay out for two or three days together; and if, at his return, his father thought proper to reproach him with leading such a loose life, Gaspard immediately obliged him to silence, by answering him with the greatest haughtiness and insolence.

"Scipio," said the old man to me one day, "I have a son who is my only trouble; he runs into all manner of debauchery; this very much surprises me, for his education has not been neglected. I have provided him all the best masters, and my friend, Father Alexis, has used his utmost endeavours to put him into the right way; but all to no purpose. Gaspard is turned a perfect libertine. You will tell me, perhaps, that I used him with too much indulgence, as he advanced in years, and that is what has been his ruin. But that is not the case; he has been well chastised when I thought proper to use severity; for as good-natured as I am, I can be resolute when there is a necessity for it: I have even had him shut up in a house of correction, and he is only grown so much the worse; in
a word,

a word, he is one of those incorrigible tempers, whom neither good examples, remonstrances, or even chastisement, will reform nothing but Heaven can work that miracle.

If I was not much moved at the affliction of this unfortunate father, at least I pretended so to be. "How I pity you, Sir!" said I "a good man, like you, deserved to have had a better son." "What would you have me do, child?" answered he. "It has pleased God to deny me that consolation. Among the many causes of complaint I have against Gaspard, there is one that gives me abundance of uneasiness; it is the great inclination he has to rob me, which he finds but too often the means to satisfy, notwithstanding my vigilance. The foot-boy, in whose place you are come, had an understanding with him, which was the reason of my turning him away; depend upon it, you will not suffer yourself to be corrupted by my son, but will espouse my interests; I do not at all doubt, but Father Alexis has recommended it to you very strongly." "I will assure you, Sir," replied I, "his Reverence exhorted me for an hour together, not to have any thing in view, but your interest: but I can likewise aver to you that I had no need of this exhortation: I find myself entirely disposed to serve you faithfully; and, in short, I promise you a zeal proof against all temptations."

Whoever hears but one side, hears nothing: young Velasquez, a perfect limb of the devil, judging by my physiognomy, that I should not be more difficult to be seduced than my predecessor,

deceffor, took me afide, and accofted me in this manner : “ Hark you, my child, I am fatif-
fied my father has enjoined you to watch me ;
take care, however, what you do ; I give you
warning, that employment is not without its
inconveniencies ; you will find it very difa-
greeable : if I once perceive that you are a spy
upon me, I will cudgel you as long as there is
any life in you ; whereas, if you will join
with me in cheating my father, you may ex-
pect every thing from my gratitude. Shall I
fpeak more plainly ? you fhall fhare with me
in every prize we make together. I leave you
to your choice : declare this moment for the
father, or for the fon ; I will have no ftand-
ing neuter.”

“ On my word, Sir,” answered I, “ you
put me to it prodigioufly ; I fee very well it
will be impoffible for me to avoid taking your
part, although, at the bottom, I feel within
myself a reluctance to betray Signior Velaf-
quez.” “ You ought not to make the leaft
fcruple of it,” rejoined Gaspard ; “ he is an
old mifer, who would ftill keep me in leading-
ftrings ; a wretch who denies me what is ne-
ceffary, in refufing to defray the expences of
my pleasures : for pleasures are abfolute ne-
ceffaries to a man of five and twenty : it is in
this light you muft look upon my father.”

“ It is a done thing, Sir,” faid I, “ there
is no holding out againft fuch a juft caufe of
complaint ; I offer my fervice to fecond you
in your laudable enterprifes : but let us con-
ceal our intelligence very carefully, for fear
your faithful affiftant fhould be turned out of

doors. It would not be amiss in you, me thinks, to affect to hate me ; speak to me as roughly as you please before people ; never mind the terms ; even some cuffs on the ear and a few kicks on the breech, will do no harm ; on the contrary, the more marks you shew of an aversion to me, the more confidence Signior Balthasar will repose in me ; as for my part, I will pretend to shun your company ; when I wait on you at table, I will seem to do it with regret ; and when I talk of you to the journeymen, do not take it ill if I rail at you to the last degree."

" By St. Francis," cried young Velasquez at these last words, " I admire you, my boy ; you discover a prodigious genius for tricking in one of your age ; I draw from thence a good omen of our future success. I hope by the help of thy wit, not to leave my father a single pistole." " You do me too much honour," said I, " to rely so greatly upon my industry ; however, I will do my utmost to justify your good opinion of me ; and if I do not succeed, at least it shall be none of my fault."

It was not long before I shewed Gaspard that I was actually the very person he wanted ; and this is the first service I did him. Balthasar's strong box was in the good man's chamber, at his bed's head, and served him as a hassock to kneel upon, when he was at his devotions. Every time I looked upon it, it rejoiced my sight, and I often said to it, within myself, " Sweet dear strong box, will you be always shut against me ? Shall I never have

have the pleasure of contemplating the treasure you conceal?" As I went when I pleased into this chamber, whose entrance was forbidden only to Gaspard, it happened one day that I entered it unperceived by his father, who, after opening and shutting again the strong box, hid the key behind the hangings, not thinking himself observed by any one. I took good notice of the place, and immediately imparted this discovery to my young master, who, embracing me with transports, "Ah! my dear Scipio," said he, "what is it you tell me? Our fortunes are made, my boy. I will get you some wax this very day, upon which you shall take the impress of the key, and deliver it to me. I shall find it no difficult matter to meet with an obliging locksmith in Cordova, which is not the least stocked with rogues of any city in Spain."

"Why," said I to Gaspard, "should you be at the trouble of getting a false key made? Cannot we have recourse to the true one?" "Yes," answered he; "but I am afraid that my father, either through mistrust, or otherwise, may take a fancy to hide it elsewhere; and the safest way is to have one to ourselves." I approved of his fear, and yielding to his opinion, prepared myself to take the impress of the key; which was accordingly done, one fine morning, while my old master was gone to Father Alexis, where he usually made very long visits. Neither did I stop there; I had recourse to the original key, to open the strong box, which being full of great and little bags, put me into an agreeable perplexity: I knew

not which to chuse, so great an affection found in myself both for the one and the other. However, as the fear of being caught would not suffer me to make a long examination, I seized, at all hazards, one of the largest: then having again locked the box and put the key behind the hangings, I hastened out of the room with my prey, which I hid in a little closet where I lay, under my bed.

Having performed this operation so successfully, I ran with all speed to young Velasquez, who was waiting for me in a house which we had appointed for our rendezvous and put him in raptures, by telling him what I had done. He was so highly delighted with me, that he loaded me with caresses, and generously offered me half of what was in the bag, which I refused. "No, no, Sir," said I, "this first bag is all for you alone; make use of it for your own necessary occasions. I will return immediately to the strong box where, thank heaven! there is enough for both of us." In effect, three days after, I took away a second bag, in which, as well as in the first, there were five hundred crowns of which I would accept but a quarter, whatever entreaties Gaspard used, to induce me to share them with him brother-like.

As soon as this young man saw himself flush in pocket, and consequently in a condition to satisfy his love for women and gaming, he gave himself up entirely to them: he was even so unfortunate to be passionately fond of one of those famous coquets, who

In a little time, can devour and swallow up the greatest estates ; and was so profuse in his expences, to oblige her, that it put me upon making such frequent visits to the strong box, that at last old Velasquez perceived he was robbed. " Scipio," says he to me one morning, " I must intrust you with a secret, somebody robs me, my lad ; they have found the way to open my strong box, and have stolen out several bags ; this is what I am very well assured of. Whom ought I to accuse of this theft ? or rather, who but my son can have done it ? Gaspard must either have entered my bedchamber clandestinely, or you must have introduced him thither yourself ; for I am almost tempted to believe you an accomplice with him, although you seem to bear a very ill-will to each other. Nevertheless, I will not give way to this suspicion, because Father Alexis has passed his word for your fidelity." I answered, that, thank heaven, what was another man's never tempted me, and I accompanied this lie with a hypocritical grimace, which served me as an apology.

In effect, the good old man never mentioned it to me again ; but, nevertheless, he did not cease to involve me in his mistrust ; and taking proper precautions against our felonious attempts, he had a new lock clapt upon his strong box ; and ever after carried the key in his pocket. By this means, all communication being cut off between us and the bags, we looked both of us very bluely ; especially Gaspard, who, being no longer able to be at the same expence for his nymph, was afraid

of being obliged to visit her no more. He had the wit, however, to bethink himself of an expedient, which helped him to rub on some days longer ; and this ingenious expedient was, to convert to his own use, under the pretence of borrowing, all that accrued to me, from the visits I had made to the strong box. I gave him then all, even to the last piece ; which, methinks, might pass for an anticipated restitution, which I made to the old man, in the person of his heir.

That young man, when he had exhausted this his last refuge, considering that he had no other, fell into a profound and gloomy melancholy, which, by little and little, disturbed his brain. He no longer looked upon his father, but as a man who was the cause of all the misfortunes of his life ; in short, he fell into so violent a despair, that, without being restrained by the ties of blood, the wretch formed the horrible design to have him poisoned ; and, not satisfied with communicating to me this execrable project, he even proposed to me that I should serve him as the instrument of his vengeance. At this proposal I felt myself shudder with horror : “ Is it possible, Sir,” said I, “ you can be so far abandoned by Heaven, as to have formed this abominable resolution ? What ! can you be capable of an attempt upon the life of the author of your being ? Shall they see you in Spain, on the very spot where Christianity is professed in its greatest purity, perpetrate a crime, the bare thought of which would strike the most barbarous nations with abhorrence ?

No,

No, my dear master," pursued I, falling at his knees, "no, you shall not be guilty of an action that would raise the whole world up in arms against you, and be infallibly followed by an infamous punishment."

I said abundance more to Gaspard, to dissuade him from so black an attempt; I know not from whence I got all those arguments of a man of strict principles, which I made use of to combat his despair; but it is certain, I talked to him like a Salamanca doctor, as young, and as much the son of Coscolina, as I was. Nevertheless, in vain did I represent to him, that he ought to recal his banished reason, and reject courageously the detestable thoughts that had possessed his mind; all my eloquence was to no purpose. He hung down his head upon his breast, and keeping a full silence, whatever I could say to him, made me judge, that he would not recede from his black purpose.

Hereupon, taking my resolution upon the spot, I desired a private hearing of my old master; with whom being shut up, "Sir," said I, "suffer me to throw myself at your feet, and implore your pardon." Having thus spoke, I fell prostrate before him, in great confusion, and my eyes streaming with tears. The draper, surpris'd at my action, and my disordered looks, asked what I had done. "A fault I heartily repent," answered I, "and with which I shall always reproach myself, as long as I live. I have had the weakness to hearken to your son, and to assist him in robbing you." At the same time I made him
a sincere

a sincere confession of all that had passed upon this head; after which, I gave him an account of the conversation I had just had with Gaspard, whose design I revealed to him without forgetting the least circumstance.

As bad an opinion as old Velasquez had of his son, he could scarce give credit to this discourse. However, not doubting but what I had told him was true, "Scipio," said he, lifting me up, for I was all the while at his feet, "I forgive you, in consideration of the intelligence you have just given me. Gaspard," pursued he, raising his voice, "Gaspard has a design against my life! Ah! ungrateful son! monster, whom it would have been better to have smothered at his birth, than to have suffered him to live to become a parricide; what reason hast thou to make any attempt upon my days? I supply thee yearly with a reasonable sum for thy pleasures, and art thou not satisfied? will nothing then content thee, but my suffering thee to lavish away my whole fortune?" After this bitter apostrophe, he enjoined me secrecy, and bid me leave him to himself, to consider what he ought to do on so ticklish a juncture.

I was very much in pain to know what course this unfortunate father would take, when the same day he ordered Gaspard to be called, and spoke to him thus, without taking notice to him of what was in his heart. "Son," said he, "I have received a letter from Merida, from whence word is sent me, that if you are inclined to marry, you shall have the choice of a maiden about fifteen, and

and perfectly handsome, who will bring you great fortune. If you are not averse to this marriage, we will set out to-morrow at break of day for Merida; we will see the person proposed, and if you fancy her, you shall have her." Gaspard hearing talk of a large portion, and, thinking himself already sure of it, answered without hesitation, that he was ready to go the journey; so that they set out next morning, at break of day, only by themselves, and mounted upon two good mules.

When they were amongst the mountains of Fesira, and in a place as much frequented by robbers as it is dreaded by travellers, Balthazar dismounted, and bid his son do the same. The young man obeyed, but asked, Why he was to alight in that place? "I am going to tell you," answered the old father, looking on him with an eye, wherein both grief and anger was painted to the life; "we shall not go to Merida; the marriage I mentioned to you, is nothing but a story invented to draw you hither. I am not ignorant, most unnatural and ungrateful son, I am not ignorant of the black design you have formed in your heart. I know that a poison, prepared by your care and contrivance, is intended to be given me; but fool as thou art, couldst thou flatter thyself with the hopes, that thou shouldst take away my life in that manner, unpunished? What a mistake! This crime would be soon discovered, and thou wouldst die by the hands of the hangman. There is," continued he, "a safer way to satisfy thy rage, without exposing thyself to an ignominious

nious death: we are here without witnesses and in a place where murders are committed every day; since thou thirstest so much after my blood, strike thy poniard into my heart and my death will be imputed to robbers." At these words, Balthazar opened his breast "Here, Gaspard," pursued he, "give me the fatal blow, to punish me for having begot such a reprobate as thee."

Young Velasquez, struck with these words as if they had been a thunderbolt, far from endeavouring to justify himself, fell down on a sudden in a swoon at his father's feet: upon which the good old man, seeing him in that condition, which seemed to him the forerunner of repentance, could not forbear giving way to his fatherly affection, but used his utmost endeavours to bring him to himself. However, Gaspard had no sooner recovered the use of his senses, than not being able to bear the presence of a father so justly incensed, he exerted all his strength to get up, mounted again upon his mule, and rode away without saying one word. Balthazar suffered him to be gone, and abandoning him to his remorse, returned to Cordova, where, six months after, he heard that he had entered himself amongst the Carthusians at Seville, to pass the rest of his days there in repentance.

C H A P. XII.

The conclusion of the life of Scipio.

BAD examples sometimes produce very good effects; the behaviour of young Velasquez

Velasquez brought me to make serious reflections on my own. I began to resist my thievish inclinations, and to live like an honest man. The habit I had got of converting to my own use all the money that I could lay hands on, was formed by so many repeated acts, that it was not easy to be overcome; nevertheless I was in hopes of getting the better of it; imagining within myself, that in order to become virtuous, nothing more was wanting, but a hearty desire of being so. I undertook then this great work, and Heaven seemed to bless my efforts; I ceased to look upon the old draper's strong box with a covetous eye; I even believe, that though it had depended only upon me to have got some bags, I should not have done it: I must own, however, that it would have been imprudence, to have put my budding integrity to such a dangerous test: accordingly Velasquez took care he would not put it to the venture.

Don Manrique de Medrano, a young gentleman, and knight of the order of Alcancara, came often to my master's shop. He was our customer, and that one of our noblest, if not one of our best. I had the good fortune to be agreeable to this cavalier, who, every time he met me, would tease me to set me a-talking, and seemed to listen to me with pleasure. "Scipio," said he to me one day, "if I had a foot-boy of your humour, I should think I possessed a treasure; and if you did not belong to a man for whom I have some value, I would spare no pains to entice you from him." "Sir," answered I, "you would

would not find it very difficult to succeed therein; for I have naturally an inclination for persons of quality; that is my blind faith in their easy behaviour charms me." "Since it is so," replied Don Manrique, "I will desire Signior Balthazar's consent for taking you into my service; I hardly believe he will refuse me such a favour." In effect, Velasquez did grant it him; and that with so much the more ease, because he did not think the loss of a rogue irreparable. As for my part, I was very glad of this change; a tradesman's servant seeming to me but a shabroon, in comparison of the servant of a knight of Alcantara.

To give you a true description of my new master, I must tell you, that he was a cavalier of a most amiable figure, and one that was agreeable to every body, for the sweetness of his temper, and his lively wit. Besides this he had abundance of courage and probity; in short, he wanted only a good estate; but being the youngest branch of a family, more illustrious than rich, he was obliged to live at the expence of an old aunt, who resided at Toledo, and who loving him as well as if he had been her own son, took care to remit him what money was necessary for his maintenance.

He was always genteelly dressed, and met with a good reception every where; visiting all the ladies of the best quality in that city and amongst the rest, the marchioness de Almenara, a widow of seventy-two years old who, by her obliging behaviour, and the charms

charms of her wit, drew to her assembly all the nobility of Cordova: both gentlemen and ladies took pleasure in her conversation; in-
 much that her house was named, *the rendez-
 vous of all good company.*

My master was one of this lady's most assiduous visitants. One night, when he was just come from her, he seemed to me to have a more lively air than was natural to him. "My Lord," said I, "you seem very gay; may your faithful servant ask the cause? has not something extraordinary happened?" The knight smiled at this question, and confessed to me, that really his thoughts were all taken up with a serious conversation he had just had with the Marchioness de Almenara. "I wish with all my heart," said I laughing, "that this minion of seventy had made you a declaration of love." "Do not imagine it is a jesting matter," answered he; "for know, friend, that the Marchioness is actually in love with me." "Don Manrique," said she to me, "I am neither a stranger to the narrowness of your fortune, nor to the nobleness of your family; I have an inclination for you; and have resolved to marry you, to put you in better circumstances; it not being decent for me to enrich you any other way. I know very well that this marriage will expose me to the ridicule of the world; that a hundred slanderous reports will be raised about me; and, in short, that I shall be reckoned an old fool, that is fond of a bedfellow. But no matter, I design to despise all their tittle-tattle, in order to make you master of an agreeable for-

tune. All I fear," pursued she, "is, that you will be averse to comply with my intentions."

"This," continued my master, "is what the Marchioness has said to me; and I am the more astonished at it, because she is the most virtuous and most prudent woman in Cordova. Accordingly, I made answer, that I was surpris'd she did me so much honour to offer me her hand, she who had always persisted in the resolution of remaining ever a widow: to which she replied, that having a considerable estate, she was willing, during her life, to share it with a man of honour, for whom she had a value." "In all appearance then," rejoined I, "you are determin'd to take the leap." "Can you doubt it?" answered he. "the Marchioness is immensely rich, with a generous soul, and abundance of wit; I must have lost my senses to let slip a settlement so much to my advantage."

I approved very much of my master's design to lay hold on such a fine opportunity of making his fortune, and even advis'd him to do it out of hand, so much was I afraid of his changing her mind. By good fortune, the lady was yet more eager for this affair than I accordingly, she gave such effectual orders that the preparations for her nuptials were soon ready. As soon as it was known in the city, that the old Marchioness de Almenara was about marrying young Don Manrique de Medrano, the laughers began to divert themselves at the lady's expence; but in vain did they spend their spirits in scurvy jests, they could

could not dissuade her from her design; she left the whole city to talk on, and followed her knight to the altar. Their nuptials were celebrated with a splendour that gave a fresh handle for detraction. "The bride," said they, "ought at least, in modesty, not to have had this pomp and clutter, which does not at all become old widows that marry young husbands." However, the Marchioness, instead of seeming ashamed of being wife to so young a gentleman at her age, gave herself up without restraint to the joy she felt thereat. There was a great entertainment, with a fine concert, and the whole ended with a ball, at which all the nobility of both sexes were present. Towards the end of the ball, our new-married couple stole away to an apartment, where being shut in with a waiting-woman and myself, the Marchioness addressed herself as follows, to my master: "Don Manrique, this is your apartment, mine is in another part of the house; we will pass the night in separate rooms, and will live all day like mother and son." The knight was deceived at first by this carriage, and believed the lady only said so, to induce him to have recourse to a pleasing violence; and imagining he ought in civility to appear amorous, he went up to her, and offered her very officiously to serve her as a valet de chambre; but far from suffering him to undress her, she put him back with a serious air, and said: "Hold, Don Manrique, if you take me for one of those doting old women, who marry again out of frailty, you are vastly mistaken: I did not take

you for my husband, to make you buy those advantages I have secured you by our marriage-contract: no; they are the pure gift of my heart, and all I require of your gratitude, is your friendship." At these words she left my master and me in our apartment, and withdrew to her own with her woman, after having absolutely enjoined the knight not to follow her.

After her being gone, we remained for some time amazed at what we had just heard. "Scipio," said my master, "could you ever have expected such a speech as the Marchioness has made me? What do you think of such a lady?" "I think, Sir," answered I, "that she is a woman without her fellow." How happy are you in having her! It is having a perfect sine-cure." "For my part," rejoined Don Manrique, "I admire a wife of such a valuable character, and resolve to make her amends by all imaginable complaisance, for the sacrifice she offers up to her delicacy." We continued talking of her some time longer, after which we went to rest; I in a little bed in a closet, and my master on a good down one, that had been prepared for him, where, I believe, at the bottom of his heart, he was not sorry to ly alone, and to come off scot-free.

The rejoicings began again next day, and the bride seemed in such a good humour, that she gave full scope to the laughers. She was even the first to laugh at the jests they passed, and incited them herself to be merry, by talking with a good grace all their flights. Don
Manrique

Manrique also, on the other hand, seemed no less pleased than his spouse; and one would have sworn, by the tender looks he gave her, and his obliging way of speaking to her, that he had taken a fancy to old age. In the evening the new-married couple had another conversation, wherein it was agreed, that, without putting any constraint upon themselves, they should both live in the same manner, as they had done before their wedding. Nevertheless, this praise must be given to Don Manrique; he did, in consideration of his wife, what few husbands would have condescended to in his place; he abandoned a little gypsy whom he loved, and by whom he was beloved again, resolving not to hold a correspondence, which would seem, as he said, an insult to the delicacy of his wife's behaviour to him.

Whilst he gave such pregnant proofs of his gratitude to this old lady, she repaid them with usury, though she was ignorant of them; she made him master of her strong box, which was yet more valuable than that of Velasquez. As she had dismissed some of her retinue, during her widowhood, she again put it upon the same foot, as it was in the time of her first husband; she hired more servants, and filled her stables with good horses and mules: in a word, by her generous behaviour, the poorest knight of the order of Alcantara became soon the richest. You will ask me, perhaps, what I got by all this? I received fifty pistoles from my mistress, and a hundred from my master, who likewise made

me his secretary, with a salary of four hundred crowns a-year; he even reposed so much confidence in me, as to make me his treasurer.

“His treasurer!” cried I, interrupting Scipio in this place, and bursting into a laughter.

“Yes, Sir,” answered he, with a cold and grave air, “yes, his treasurer; and I dare even aver, that I discharged this employment with honour. It is true, I may perhaps be something in arrears in my accounts; for as I took up my wages beforehand out of the cash, and was forced to leave Don Manrique’s service on a sudden, it is not impossible but there may be some deficiency: be that as it will, it is the last reproach that can be made me, since I have been ever since full of probity and honour.”

“I was then,” pursued the son of Coscoлина, “secretary and treasurer to Don Manrique, who seemed as well pleased with me as I was satisfied with him, when he received a letter from Toledo, wherein word was sent him, that Donna Theodora Moscosa was at the point of death. He was so sensibly affected at this news, that he set out immediately to see that lady, who had been as a mother to him for some years. I attended him on his journey, with only a valet de chambre, and one footman, all mounted upon the best horses in our stables; and we arrived at Toledo with the utmost expedition. We there found Donna Theodora in a condition to give us hopes she would not die of that illness; and in effect, our conjectures, though contrary to the opinion

pinion of an old physician, who governed her, were not contradicted by the event.

Whilst our good aunt recovered her health insensibly, not so much, perhaps, by the virtue of the medicines they made her take, as by the presence of her dear nephew, Mr. Treasurer passed his time the most agreeably that was possible, with some young fellows, whose acquaintance was very proper to procure him occasions of spending his money. They sometimes carried me to tennis courts, where they engaged me to play with them, and not being so good a gamester as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. I began to take a fancy to gaming insensibly; and if I had given up myself entirely to that passion, it would doubtless have obliged me to take up some quarters beforehand out of the cash; but, fortunately for me, love interposed to save both the cash and my virtue. One day, as I was passing by the church de los Reyes, I perceived through a lattice, whose curtains were open, a young maiden, who seemed to me not so much a mortal as a goddess: I should make use of a yet stronger term, if there were any, to express better the impression her sight made upon me. I inquired after her, and, by the strength of indefatigable diligence, was informed, that her name was *Beatrice*, and that she was woman to Donna Julia, youngest daughter to the Count de Polan."

Here Beatrice interrupted Scipio, by bursting into a violent laughter; after which, addressing herself to my wife, "Charming Antonia,"

tonia," said she, "look at me well, I beg of you; have not I, in your opinion, the air of a goddess?" "You had then in my eyes," answered Scipio, "and since I no longer suspect your fidelity, you seem to me handsomer than ever." After such a gallant repartee my secretary went on thus with his story.

"This discovery added fresh fuel to my flame, which, to say the truth, was not the least lawful one; I imagined it would be easy to triumph over her virtue, if I tempted her with presents capable of shaking it; but I judged amiss of the chaste Beatrice. In vain did I offer her my purse and my services, but some mercenary women; she rejected my proposals with disdain. Her resistance did but add to my desires: I had recourse to the last expedient; I offered her my hand; which she accepted, as soon as she knew I was secretary and treasurer to Don Manrique. As we thought proper to conceal our nuptials for some time, we were joined in wedlock secretly in the presence of Lorenza Sephora, governorante to Seraphina, and some others of the Count de Polan's domestics. No sooner was I married to Beatrice, but she procured me the means of seeing her by day, and conversing with her at night, in the garden; to which I had access by a little door she gave me the key of. Never were a couple better satisfied with each other than Beatrice and me; we waited with equal impatience for the hour of the rendezvous; we hastened thither with the same eagerness; and the time we staid together, though it was sometimes

pretty

pretty long, always seemed to us too short.

“One night, which was as cruel to me as the former ones had been agreeable, I was very much surpris’d, on my entrance into the garden, to find the little door open. This novelty alarmed me : I drew from thence an ill omen, and turned pale, and trembled, as if I had foreseen what was to befall me ; and advancing in the dark towards an arbour where I used to meet my spouse, I heard a man’s voice. I stopt short on a sudden to listen better, and my ears were immediately struck with these words, “Make me not languish, then, my dear Beatrice, complete my happiness ; remember that your fortune depends upon it.” Instead of having the patience to listen any longer, I thought I had no manner of business to hear more ; a jealous fury seized upon my soul, and breathing nothing but revenge, I drew my sword, and entered suddenly into the arbour. “Ah ! base debauchee,” cried I, “whoever thou art, thou must deprive me of life, before thou robbest me of my honour.” Having thus said, I fell upon the cavalier who was talking with Beatrice. He soon put himself into a posture of defence, and fought like a man who understood fencing better than me, who had only had a few lessons at Cordova. Nevertheless, as good a swordsman as he was, I made a push at him which he could not parry, or rather his foot slipped. I saw him fall ; and imagining I had wounded him mortally, fled away as fast as I could, without stopping to answer Beatrice, who called after me.”

“Yes

“Yes indeed,” said Scipio’s wife, interrupting him, “I called him to undeceive him. The cavalier with whom I was talking was Don Fernando de Leyva. This noble man, who was in love with my mistress Julia, had formed the resolution to carry her off, thinking there was no other way to get her; and I had myself made him an appointment in the garden, to concert measures for putting his design in execution; upon which he assured me my fortune depended. But in vain did I call my spouse; he fled away from me as from an unfaithful wife.”

“In the condition I was then in,” resumed Scipio, “I was capable of any thing. Those who know by experience what jealousy and what extravagancies it makes people even of the best sense commit, will not be astonished at the disorder it produced in my weak brain. I changed in a moment from one extreme to the other. I felt the love I had for my wife but a moment before, turned downright hatred; and made an oath to abandon her, and banish her for ever from my thoughts. Besides, I believed I had killed the cavalier; and, in this opinion, fearing to fall into the hands of justice, I experienced that fatal trouble, which, like a fury, pursues every where the man who has been guilty of an ill action. In this horrible situation, thinking only on making my escape, I never returned home, but went directly out of Toledo, without any more clothes than those on my back. It is true, I had threescore pistoles in my pocket, which was still a pretence

good resource for a young fellow, who pro-
 posed to himself to live always in service.

"I walked on then all the night, or, to speak
 more properly, I ran; for, having the dread
 of the alguazils always before my eyes, it
 gave me perpetually fresh vigour. The morn-
 ing found me between Rodillas and Maque-
 da: and when I came to this last town, feel-
 ing myself a little weary, I went into a church
 which had just been opened, and after saying
 a short prayer, sat me down upon a bench to
 rest me. I began then to ruminate on the
 state of my affairs, which had but too much
 employed my thoughts; but I had not time
 to make many reflections. I heard the church
 resound with three or four smacks of a whip,
 which made me judge some muleteer was pass-
 ing by. I rose up immediately to see if I was
 not mistaken; and when I was at the door,
 I perceived one mounted upon a mule, and
 leading two others in his hand. "Stop,
 friend," said I, "where are you going with
 these mules?" "To Madrid," answered he;
 "I brought from thence hither two good
 Dominicans, and am returning back again."

"The opportunity that offered of going to
 Madrid, gave me a desire of seeing it; where-
 fore I made a bargain with the muleteer,
 mounted one of his mules, and put on to-
 wards Illescas, where we were to ly. We had
 hardly got out of Maqueda, when the mule-
 teer, a man between thirty and forty, began
 to chant aloud several church-hymns. He
 opened first with the prayers the canons say
 at matins; after which he sang the creed, as
 it

it is chanted at high mass; then proceeding to the vespers, he sang them, without forgetting even the *Magnificat*. Although the rascal stunned me, I could not forbear laughing; nay, I even urged him to go on, when he was obliged to stop to recover his breath. "Courage, friend," said I, "do not leave off if heaven has given you good lungs, you do not make an ill use of them." "Oh! for that matter, not I," answered he; "I am not. God be thanked, like most of those who travel the roads, they sing only such songs as are either smutty or profane; I do not sing even any of the ballads on our wars against the Moors; for at least they are vain, if they are not lewd." "You have a modesty and propriety," replied I, "that is hard to be found in muleteers; but with your extreme scrupulousness about the choice of your songs, have you likewise made a vow of chastity in those inns where there are pretty maids?" "Certainly," rejoined he; "continency is another thing upon which I value myself in those places; I am wholly taken up there with the care I ought to have of my mules." I was not a little astonished to hear this Phoenix of a muleteer speak in this manner; and thinking him a man of honesty and good sense, I entered into conversation with him as soon as he had sung his fill.

"We arrived at Illescas about the close of day; and when we got to the inn, I left my companion to take care of the mules, and went into the kitchen. I ordered the innkeeper to prepare us a good supper; which he promised

promised to do so well, that I should remember all my life my having lodged with him.

"Ask," pursued he, "ask your muleteer what sort of a man I am. By St. Francis, I will defy all the cooks in Madrid and Toledo to make an olla podrida comparable to mine. I will toss you up to-night a ragout of young rabbits of my dressing, to shew you whether I am in the wrong to cry up my skill." Thereupon he pointed to a stewpan, wherein there was, as he said, a rabbit already cut in pieces. "That," pursued he, "is what I design to toss you up. When I have put to it some pepper and salt, with wine, sweet herbs, and some other ingredients which I use in my sauces, I hope to serve you a ragout fit for a contador major."

"The innkeeper, after having thus extolled himself, began to dress supper; and whilst he was about it, I went into a parlour, where lying down upon a sorry bed I found there, I fell asleep, being heartily weary, and having had no rest the night before. In about two hours, the muleteer came to wake me: "Master," said he, "your supper is ready; come, if you please, and sit down at the table." There was a cloth laid in the room with two covers. We sat down thereat, the muleteer and I, and the ragout was brought in. I fell to it eagerly, and thought it exquisitely relished; whether my hunger made me judge of it too favourably, or whether it was the effect of the cook's ingredients. They afterwards served up a piece of roast mutton; and observing that the muleteer touched only the

last dish, but never tasted the other, I asked him the reason of it. He answered with a smile, that he did not love ragouts. This answer, or rather the smile with which it was accompanied, seemed to me mysterious. "You conceal from me the true reason of your not tasting this ragout," said I; "be so good as to tell it me." "Since you are desirous of knowing it," replied he, "I must tell you I have an aversion to cramming down these sorts of ragouts, ever since, on the road from Toledo to Cuenca, a great cat was served me up in a ragout, instead of a rabbit: this has given me a disgust to fricassees."

"No sooner had the muleteer said this, but notwithstanding my being infinitely hungry my stomach failed all at once. I fancied I had been eating a cat palmed upon me for a rabbit, and I could no longer look upon the ragout without making faces at it. My companion did not cure me of this suspicion, by telling me that the innkeepers in Spain often made such mistakes, as well as the pastrycooks. This discourse, as may be guessed, was a great consolation; accordingly, I had not the least inclination to return to the ragout, nor even to touch roast meat, for fear the mutton should be no more genuine than the rabbit. I got up then from the table, cursing the ragout, the innkeeper and the inn, and lying down again upon the bed, passed the night more quietly than I had expected. Next morning early, after paying my landlord as liberally as if he had used me very well, I hastened away from Illescas, with my imagination

ation still so full of the ragout, that I took for cats all the living creatures I met in my way.

"We arrived at Madrid in good time, where, as soon as I had satisfied my muleteer, I hired a room, ready furnished, near the gate, called *Sun-Gate*. My eyes, though accustomed to the beau-monde, were nevertheless dazzled at the vast concourse of noblemen that are usually to be seen at the court-end of the town. I admired the prodigious number of coaches, and the infinite crowds of gentlemen, pages, and footmen, in the retinue of the grandees. But my admiration redoubled, when, going to the King's levee, I saw that monarch surrounded by his courtiers. I no longer wondered at having heard it said, that one must see the court of Madrid, to be able to conceive all its magnificence; I was overjoyed at having come thither, and was assured, in my own thoughts, that I should do something extraordinary there. However, all I did there, was to get some acquaintance, that were of no manner of service to me. I spent all my money by little and little; and was at last very happy, with all my merit, in taking up with a pedant of Salamanca, whom a family-affair had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and to whom I became known by mere chance. He made me his *fac-totum*, and I went with him to his university when he returned thither.

"My new master was named *Don Ignatio de Ipigna*; he had assumed the title of Don, on account of having been tutor to a Duke, who,

in gratitude, had settled a pension on him for life : he had another, as senior professor of his college, and besides, exacted every year a contribution of two or three hundred pistoles from the public, by printing his books of dogmatical morals. His way of composing these works, deserves very well my making honourable mention thereof. He spent almost the whole day in reading Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing down upon a little square bit of paper, every apophthegm or fine thought which he found therein. In proportion as he filled these bits, he employed me in putting them upon a file in the shape of a garland, and each garland made a volume. What wretched books did we palm upon the world ! Not a month passed that we did not make at least two volumes, and immediately the press groaned under the burthen of our compositions. What is most surprising, is that those rhapsodies were published as novels ; and if the critics thought proper to reproach the author with stealing from the ancients, he would answer, with a haughty impudence ; *Furto latamur in ipso*.

“ He was likewise a great commentator ; and there was so much learning in his commentaries, that he frequently made remarks upon things not worthy of any annotations. As he sometimes transcribed passages out of Hesiod and other authors, (though very preposterously,) upon his square bits of paper before mentioned, I did not fail of improving myself, by being even with this pedant ; it would be ungrateful in me not to acknowledge it. I

perfected

perfected myself in writing, by often copying his works ; and though in treating me rather like a pupil than like a servant, he took care to cultivate my understanding, he did not neglect my morals at the same time. " Scipio," would he say, (when by chance he heard of any domestic, who had played a roguish trick), " take care, child, of not following the ill example of that rascal ; a servant ought to do his duty by his master, both with zeal and fidelity : " in a word, Don Ignatio let slip no opportunity of inciting me to virtue ; and his exhortations had so good an effect upon me, that I was not in the least tempted to play him any trick, during the whole fifteen months that I lived with him.

" I have already said that Dr. de Ipigna was originally of Madrid : he had a relation there, named *Catalina*, who waited upon the prince's nurse. This maiden, who is the very same to whom I had afterwards recourse to get the Signior de Santillane out of the tower of Segovia, having a mind to serve Don Ignatio, engaged her mistress to ask a benefice for him, of the Duke de Lerma. Hereupon that minister preferred him to the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, being in a conquered country, the disposal of it is in the King. We set out for Madrid as soon as we heard this news, the Doctor being desirous of thanking his benefactresses before he went to Grenada. I had then more than one opportunity of seeing and speaking to *Catalina*. My gay temper and easy air pleased her ; on the other hand, she was so much to my fancy, that I could not

help making suitable returns to the little mark of affection she shewed me : in short, we devoted ourselves entirely to each other. Forgive me this confession, my dear Beatrice, I believed you unfaithful to my bed, that your honour ought to save me from your reproaches.

“ In the mean while, Don Ignatio was preparing for his departure to Grenada ; and his relation and I being frightened at the approaching separation wherewith we were threatened, had recourse to an expedient which prevented it. I pretended to be sick, complained of my head and breast, and acted to the life a man oppressed with all the illness in the world. My master sent for a physician, who, after having well observed me, told me plainly, that my distemper was of worse consequence than was imagined, and that, in all appearance, I should keep my chamber for some time. The Doctor, impatient to be at his cathedral, did not think proper to put off his departure, but chose rather to hire another servant ; contenting himself with delivering me over to the care of a nurse with whom he left a sum of money to bury me if I died, or to reward me for my good service if I recovered.

“ As soon as I knew Don Ignatio was gone for Grenada, I was immediately cured of all my illness ; wherefore I got up ; dismissed the physician, who had so much penetration ; and turned off my nurse, who robbed me of above half the money she was to have given me. Whilst I acted this part, Catalina was playing another with Donna Anna de Gueva-

her mistress, to whom she gave to understand, that I was admirable for intrigues; this put it in her head to chuse me for one of her servants. This good nurse, whom the love of riches induced often to undertake jobs, had need of such emissaries; wherefore she received me amongst her domestics, and was not long before she put me to the trial. She sent me upon errands that required some address; and, without vanity, I did not discharge myself of them like a novice; accordingly, she was as well pleased with me, as I had reason to be dissatisfied with her. She was so covetous, that she gave me not the least share of the fruits she reaped from my labour and industry; imagining, that, in paying me my wages, she was generous enough in conscience to me. This excessive avarice would have made me soon have left her, if I had not been withheld by the goodness of Catalina, who was growing every day fonder of me than before, and at last proposed to me plainly to marry her.

"Softly," said I, "my charmer, that ceremony cannot be so soon solemnised by us. I must first hear of the death of a young person who has been beforehand with you, and to whom I was joined in wedlock for my sins." "Tell that story to somebody else," said Catalina, "you pretend you are married, to conceal from me, civilly, your being loath to take me for your wife." I protested to her, in vain, that I spoke nothing but the truth: my sincere confession seemed to her a sham; and being offended at it, she altered her way of behaviour to me. We did not quarrel indeed;

deed ; but we grew visibly cold to each other and no longer regarded each other any farther than not to break in upon common decency and civility.

“ Whilst things were in this situation, I heard that Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the first minister of the crown of Spain wanted a footman ; and this place pleased me the more, as it was cried up to me, as the most agreeable one that I could possess. “ The Signior de Santillane,” said they, “ is a cavalier full of merit, and a great favourite of the Duke de Lerma, and one who consequently cannot fail of pushing his fortune very far besides, he is one of a generous soul, in doing his business you will likewise do your own very well, you will be sure to find your account in it.” I did not neglect this opportunity, but went and offered my service to Signior Gil Blas, for whom I found in myself a strong inclination at first sight, and who hired me upon my looks. I did not hesitate then in the least upon leaving Donna Anna de Guevara for him, and he shall be, if Heaven so please the last master I will have.”

Here Scipio made an end of his story ; after which, addressing himself to me, “ Signior de Santillane,” continued he, “ be so good as to testify to these ladies, that you have always found me both a faithful and affectionate servant. I have need of your evidence to persuade them, that Coscolina’s son has reformed his morals, and made his vicious inclinations give way to virtuous sentiments.”

“ Yes, Ladies,” said I then, “ that is what

can assure you of; though Scipio in his tender years was a downright gipsy, and would let nothing escape his fingers, he is so well reformed since, that he is become the model of a servant without fault. I am so far from having any thing to reproach him with, about his behaviour to me, that I ought rather to own my having great obligations to him. The night I was seized, and carried to the tower of Segovia, he saved from pillage, and deposited in good hands, part of my effects, which he might securely have converted to his own use: nor was he contented with studying to preserve my substance, but he came in pure friendship to shut himself up with me in my confinement, preferring to the charms of liberty, the melancholy pleasure of sharing in my afflictions."

B O O K XI.

C H A P. I.

Of the greatest happiness that ever befel Gil Blas, and of the melancholy accident that put a stop to it: Of the changes that happened at court, which made Santillane return thither.

Have already observed, that Antonia and Beatrice agreed together perfectly well; the one having been accustomed to live like a respectful servant, and the other using herself willingly to play the mistress. Scipio and I were too fond husbands, and too well beloved
by

by our wives, not to have soon the satisfaction of being fathers ; they became pregnant almost at the same time. Beatrice fell in labour first and was delivered of a daughter ; a few days after which, Antonia filled us all with joy, bringing me a son. I dispatched immediately my secretary to Valencia, to carry this news to the governour, who came to Lirias with Seraphina, and the Marchioness de Pliego, to stand sureties for the child, taking a pleasure in adding this testimony of his affection to all those I had already received from him. My son, to whom that nobleman was godfather, and the Marchioness godmother, was named *Alphonso* ; and the governour's lady being willing to do me that honour, stood with me to Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of *Seraphina*.

The birth of my son not only overjoyed all the persons in the manor house, but the inhabitants of Lirias celebrated it also by rejoicings, which shewed that all the hamlet interested themselves in whatever was a satisfaction to their Lord. But, alas ! our rejoicings were of no long continuance ; or, to speak more properly, they were turned all of a sudden into mourning, tears, and lamentations by an accident, that above twenty years have not been able to make me forget, and which will ever be fresh in my memory. My son died, and my wife, though safely delivered of him, followed soon after ; a violent fever carried off my dear spouse, after fourteen months marriage. Let the reader imagine, if it is possible, the violent grief that seized me ;

fell into a stupid heaviness ; and by being too sensible of the loss I had sustained, I seemed as if I had been wholly insensible thereof. Five or six days I remained in this condition, nor would I receive any sustenance ; and had not been for Scipio, I believe verily I should rather have suffered myself to have died with hunger, or should have lost my senses. But this artful secretary had the address to deceive my grief in conforming himself to it ; he found the secret to make me take some broth, by offering it me with such a disconsolate air, that he seemed not to give it so much to preserve my life, as to nourish my affliction.

Nor was this all ; this affectionate servant wrote to Don Alphonso, to inform him of my misfortunes, and the melancholy condition I was in : that tender and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, hastened away soon after he received it, to Lirias ; I cannot, without tears, call to mind the moment he appeared before me. “ My dear Santillane,” said he, embracing me, “ I come not here to comfort you ; I come to lament with you the loss of Antonia, as you would with me that of Seraphina, should the fates snatch her from me.” In effect, he wept, and answered me sigh for sigh. As much oppressed as I was with my own sorrows, Don Alphonso’s goodness affected me very sensibly.

The governour had afterwards a long conference with Scipio, what measures to take to alleviate my grief ; and they both judged it necessary to remove me for some time from Lirias, where every thing continually brought the

the image of Antonia fresh in my mind : upon this Don Cæsar's son proposed to me the taking me with him to Valencia ; and my secretary seconded this proposal so strongly, that I, at last, accepted of it. I left Scipio then and his wife at my house, the sight of which in reality served only to aggravate my sorrows, and set out with the governour for Valencia. When I arrived there, Don Cæsar, and his amiable daughter-in-law, spared no pains to dispel my melancholy ; they had recourse, by turns, to all the amusements that were most proper to divert my thoughts ; but, notwithstanding all their officious care, I remained overwhelmed with a deep melancholy, from which they could not extricate me. Neither was it any fault of Scipio's that I did not recover my former tranquillity ; he came frequently from Lirias to Valencia to inquire after my welfare, and returned thither the more melancholy, or the more cheerful, just as he saw me more or less inclined to admit of consolation.

One morning, in particular, he entered my room pretty hastily ; " Sir," said he, with the air of one under some perplexity, " there is a report current about the city, that concerns the whole kingdom ; it is rumoured, that Philip III. is no more, and that the Prince, his son, has ascended the throne. They say besides," pursued he, " that the Cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost his place ; that he is even forbid the court ; and that Don Gaspar de Gusman, Count d'Olivarez, is at present prime minister." I felt myself somewhat mo-

ved at this news, without knowing the reason why. Scipio, perceiving it, asked me, if I was not at all affected by this great change. "Why ! how far, child," answered I, "would you have me affected therewith ? I have left the court ; all the changes that can happen there, ought for the future to be entirely indifferent to me."

"For a man of your age," replied Coscolina's son, "you are wonderfully weaned from the world. Were I in your place, I should have a desire to satisfy my curiosity ; I should go to Madrid, and there make my appearance before the young monarch, to see whether he would remember me. Your sentiments may not agree with mine, but this is a satisfaction I should give myself." "I understand you very well," resumed I ; "you would have me return to court, to attempt my fortune there once more ; or rather to turn there again a covetous ambitious wretch." "Why should your morals be again corrupted there ?" rejoined Scipio. "I have more confidence than you have in your virtue, and I will pass my word for your constancy and resolution on this occasion. The wholesome reflections you made upon the court in your disgrace, leave you no room to apprehend the dangers of it. Embark again boldly upon a sea, with all whose rocks and shelves you are acquainted." "Hold thy tongue, flatterer," interrupted I, smiling, "art thou weary of seeing me lead a quiet life ? I thought my repose had been more dear to thee."

Here our conversation was interrupted by

the arrival of Don Cæsar and his son; who confirmed to me the news of the King's death, as well as of the Duke of Lerma's disgrace. They informed me, besides; that this minister having demanded permission to retire to Rome, had not been able to obtain it, but had been ordered to go and reside at his marquisate of Denia. This said, as if they had previously concerted matters with my secretary, they advised me to set out for Madrid, and make my appearance before the new King; since I was not only known to him, but had even done him some services, which great men are generally very ready to reward. "For my part," cried Don Alphonso, "I do not in the least doubt but he will require them; Philip IV. is obliged to pay the debts of the Prince of Spain." "I am of the same opinion," said Don Cæsar; "and I look upon Santillane's journey to court, as an opportunity for him to rise to some great employment." "Indeed, my Lords," answered I, "you do not consider what you say; one would think to hear you both, that I need only go to Madrid, to have the golden key, or some other considerable employment. On the contrary, I am well satisfied, the King would not take the least notice of me, though I should appear before him; I will put it to the trial if you desire it, to undeceive you." The Lords of Leyva took me at my word, and I could not avoid promising them to set out without delay for Madrid. As soon as my secretary saw me determined to take this journey, he was filled with an excessive joy; imagining

gining I should no sooner appear before the new monarch, than he would distinguish me from the crowd, and load me with honours and favours. Hereupon pleasing his fancy with the most flattering chimeras, he raised me in his imagination to the first posts in the state, and pushed his own fortune by the means of my advancement. I prepared myself then to return to Madrid; not with the view of making my court there to fortune, but to satisfy Don Cæsar, and his son, whose minds were prepossessed with the opinion, that I should soon enjoy the good graces of my sovereign. It is true, I felt at the bottom of my heart, some desire to know if that young prince would call me again to remembrance. Drawn along by this curiosity, without either hopes or design of getting any advantage by the new reign, I set out for Madrid with Scipio, leaving the care of my house and family to Beatrice, who was an excellent manager.

C H A P. II.

Gil Blas arrives at Madrid, and appears at court, where the king knows him, and recommends him to his first minister: the success of his recommendation.

WE reached Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having given us two of his best horses, that we might make the more haste. We went then directly to a ready-furnished house, where I had already lodged twice before, and there dismounted; and

Vincent Forero, my *quondam* landlord, was not a little pleased to see me again.

As he was a man who valued himself upon knowing all that passed both at court and in the city, I asked him what was the best news at Madrid? "There is a great deal," answered he; "since Philip III.'s death, the friends and partizans of the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, have taken abundance of pains to preserve his Eminence in the ministry, but all their efforts have been in vain; the Count d'Olivarez has got the better of them. It is pretended, that Spain loses nothing by the change; and that this new minister is a man of such an extensive genius, that he would even be capable of governing the whole universe: heaven grant it prove true. What is very certain," continued he, "is, that the people have conceived a most extraordinary opinion of his capacity; we shall see in the end, whether the Duke of Lerma's post is better or worse filled by his successor." Forero's tongue being thus set a-going, he gave me a particular account of all the alterations that had been made at the court, since Count d'Olivarez had been at the helm of the Spanish monarchy.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid, I went to the King's apartment after dinner, and placed myself in his way as he was going to his closet, but he never looked upon me. I went the next day to the same place, but was not a bit more fortunate; and the day after, he just cast his eyes upon me *en passant*, but seemed not to take the least notice of my person.

person. "You see," said I to Scipio who was with me, "that the King does not remember me, or if he does call me to mind, he does not care to renew acquaintance with me. I believe it would not be amiss to steer our course back again to Valencia." "Let us not be so hasty in our resolutions, Sir," answered my secretary; "you know better than I, that the only way to succeed at court, is by patience. Cease not to shew yourself to his Majesty; by often placing yourself in his sight, you will oblige him to consider you more attentively, and to call to mind the features of his faithful agent to the fair Catalina."

That Scipio might have no room to reproach me, I persevered in dancing the same attendance for three weeks. At last, one day, it so happened, that the young monarch struck with my sight, ordered me to be called. I went to him then into his closet, but not without being in some confusion at being admitted to a *tete à tete* with my sovereign. "Who are you?" said his Majesty, "your features are not unknown to me; where have I seen you?" "Sire," answered I trembling, "I had the honour to conduct you one night, with the Count de Lemos, to ——" "Ah! I remember it very well," cried the Prince, interrupting me; "you was then secretary to the Duke of Lerma; and, if I am not mistaken, your name is *Santillane*. I have not forgot that you served me on that occasion with abundance of zeal, and was but scurvily rewarded for your pains. Was not you put in

prison for that adventure?" "Yes," answered I, "Sire, I was six months at the tower of Segovia; but you had the goodness to get me enlarged." "That does not acquit me of what I owe Santillane," replied he; "it is not enough that I had him set at liberty, I must make him amends for the troubles he suffered for my sake."

Just as that prince had spoken these words, the Count d'Olivarez entered the closet. Every thing gives umbrage to favourites; he was astonished to find there one unknown to him; and the King redoubled his surprise, by saying, "Count, I put this young man into your hands; give him some employment; I charge you with the care of advancing his fortune." The minister affected to receive this order with a gracious air, but examined me all the while from head to foot, and was in great pain to know who I was: when his Majesty, directing his discourse to me, and making me a sign to withdraw: "Go, friend," continued he, "the Count will not fail to employ you, both advantageously for my service and your own interest."

Hereupon I left the closet immediately, and rejoined the son of Coscolina, who, burning with impatience to know what the King had said to me, was in an inexpressible uneasiness. He asked me, as soon as I came up to him, whether we were to return to Valencia or to continue at court. "You shall be judge yourself," answered I; and at the same time I filled him with raptures, by relating to him, word for word, the little discourse I had just had with

with the young monarch. "My dear master," then said Scipio, in the excess of his joy, "will you believe me another time? Confess that the Lords of Leyva and I were not in the wrong, to advise you to take a journey to Madrid. I already see you in an eminent post; you will become the Calderona of Count d'Olivarez." "That is what I do not in the least desire," cried I, interrupting him; "that post is furrounded with too many precipices to excite my envy. I should wish for an employment wherein I should have no opportunity of doing justice, nor of making a shameful traffic of my Prince's goodness. After the use I made of my past favour, I cannot be too much upon my guard against avarice and ambition." "Go, Sir," resumed my secretary, the minister will put you in some good post, wherein you may do your duty, without ceasing to be an honest man."

More pressed by Scipio, than urged by my own curiosity, I went next morning, before break of day, to the Count d'Olivarez; having been informed, that every morning, whether winter or summer, he gave audience, by candle-light, to all who had any thing to say to him. I placed myself modestly in a corner of the parlour, and from thence examined the Count as soon as he made his appearance; for I had taken but little notice of him in the King's closet. I saw a man of a more than middle stature and who might have passed for fat, in a country where one seldom sees any but who are lean. He was so round-shouldered, that I thought him hump-backed,

backed, though in reality he was not so; his head, which was of an extraordinary bigness, hung down upon his breast; his hair was black and lank, his visage long, his complexion olive, his mouth sunk in, and his chin long and peaked, and very much turned up.

Such an assemblage of ill features were very far from making the owner a handsome man; nevertheless, as I imagined him disposed to oblige me, I looked upon him with indulgence, and even thought him agreeable. It is true, he received every one with an affable and kind air, and took very graciously all the petitions that were presented him, which seemed to serve him instead of a good mien. Nevertheless, when I advanced in my turn to salute him, and make myself known to him, he gave an ill natured threatening look, and turning his back upon me, without vouchsafing to hear me, returned again into his closet. I then fancied this nobleman more deformed than he really was, and went out of the parlour, very much confounded at such a savage reception, without knowing what I ought to think of it.

Having rejoined Scipio, who waited for me at the door; "Do you know," said I, "what a welcome has been given me?" "No," answered he, "but it is easy to guess; the minister, ready to comply with his prince's pleasure, has doubtless offered you some considerable employment." "You are vastly mistaken," replied I; at the same time I told him in what manner he had received me. He heard me very attentively; after which

which he said, "The Count must not have called you to mind, but must have taken you for another ; I advise you to see him again ; I do not doubt but he will look upon you more graciously." I followed my secretary's advice, and appeared before the minister a second time ; when treating me yet worse than at first, he knit his brows as soon as he saw me, as if my sight had been painful to him ; after which he turned his eyes off me, and retired without saying one word.

This behaviour stung me to the soul, so that I was tempted to set out directly on my return to Valencia ; but Scipio did not fail to oppose this, not being able to renounce the flattering hopes he had conceived. "Do not you see," said I, "that the Count is resolved to drive me away from the court ? The King has expressed an affection for me, is not that sufficient to draw upon me the aversion of his favourite ? Let us yield, my boy, let us yield with a good grace, to the power of such a formidable enemy." "Sir," answered Scipio, exasperated to the last degree against the Count d'Olivarez, "I would not quit my ground so easily ; I would complain to the King of the little regard the minister has to his recommendation." "Very bad counsel, my friend," said I ; "should I take that imprudent step, it would not be long before I should repent it ; I do not even know, whether I do not run some risk in staying so long in this city.

At this discourse, my secretary recollected himself ;

himself; and considering that in effect, we had to do with a man, who had it in his power, when he pleased, to make us pay a second visit to the tower of Segovia, he began to sympathise with me in my fear; wherefore he no longer opposed my desire of leaving Madrid, from whence I resolved to be gone the very next morning.

CHAP. III.

What hindered Gil Blas from putting in practice the resolution he had taken of leaving the court; and of the important service done him by Joseph Navarro.

AS I was returning to my lodging, I met Joseph Navarro, clerk of the kitchen to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, and my old friend. I saluted him, and accosted him, by asking, whether he knew me, or would be so good as to speak to a wretch, who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. "You own then," said he, "that you have not used me too well?" "Yes," answered I; "and you have a right to load me with reproaches; I deserve them all, if I had not already expiated my crime by the remorse that followed it." "Since you have repented of your fault," answered Navarro, embracing me, "I ought no longer to remember it." On the other hand, I pressed Joseph in my arms, and we both reassumed for each other our pristine sentiments of friendship.

He had heard of my imprisonment, and the disorder of my affairs; but was ignorant of all the rest; wherefore I informed him of all,

all, even to the conversation I had with the King; neither did I conceal from him the ill reception I had just met with from the minister, nor my design of retiring to my solitude. "Take care how you do that," said he; "since his Majesty has expressed an affection for you, it is fit it should be of some service to you. Under the rose, the Count d'Olivarez is one of a very singular temper; he is a nobleman full of whims; sometimes, as on this occasion, he behaves after a manner that is quite shocking; and he alone has the key to all his irregular actions. As for the rest, whatever reasons he may have for receiving you ill, keep here close, and stir not an inch; that shall not hinder your making your advantage of the King's goodness, that is what I can assure you of; I will speak two words this evening to Don Balthazar de Zuniga, my master, who is uncle to the Count d'Olivarez, and who shares with him the cares of the government." Navario having thus said to me, asked where I lodged; after which we parted.

It was not long before I saw him again; he came the very next day to my lodging to visit me. "Signior de Santillane," said he, "you have got a protector; my master is willing to assist you with his credit; upon the good character I have given him of you, he has promised to speak for you to the Count d'Olivarez his nephew; and I do not in the least doubt, but he will prepossess him in your favour." My friend Navarro, resolving not to serve me by halves, presented me two days afterwards

terwards to Don Balthazar, who said to me with a gracious air, "Signior de Santillane, your friend Joseph has extolled you in such terms, as have gained me over to your interest." I made a low bow to Signior de Zuniga, and answered, that I should all my life be infinitely sensible of the obligation Navarro had laid upon me, by having procured me the protection of a minister, who was justly called *the light of the council*. At this answer, which flattered him so agreeably, Don Balthazar patted me on the shoulder, laughing, and added, "You may return to-morrow to the Count d'Olivarez; you will be better satisfied with him."

I made my appearance then for the third time before the first minister, who having distinguished me amongst the crowd, cast his eyes on me with a smile; from whence I drew a good omen. "This looks well," said I to myself, "the uncle has made his nephew hear reason." I now fully expected a favourable reception, and accordingly my expectation was answered. The Count, after having given audience to every one, took me with him into his closet, where he said with a familiar air, "Friend Santillane, forgive me the perplexity I put you in for my own diversion; I took a pleasure in making you uneasy, to try your prudence, and see what you would do in your ill humour. I do not in the least doubt, but you imagined that you was disagreeable to me; but, on the contrary, my boy, I must own, that your person pleases me very well. If the King, my master, had
not

not ordered me to take care of your fortune, I should do it of my own inclination. Besides, Don Balthazar de Zuniga, my uncle, to whom I can refuse nothing, has desired me to look upon you as a man, whose interest he has at heart ; there needs no more to determine me to bind you to my service."

This discourse made such a lively impression upon my senses, that I was quite confounded ; I fell prostrate at the feet of the minister ; who, having bid me get up, went on in this manner, " Come hither again this afternoon, and ask for my steward, and he will tell you what orders I shall have given him." At these words, his Excellency went out of his closet, in order to go to mass ; which he used to do every day, after having given audience ; and from thence he went to the King's levee.

C H A P. IV.

Gil Blas gains the love of the Count d'Olivarez.

I Did not fail going again to the first minister's, and asking for his steward, who was called *Don Raymond Caporis*. No sooner had I acquainted him with my name, but saluting me with great marks of respect, " Signior," said he, " be pleased to follow me ; I will conduct you to the apartment that is appointed for you in this hotel." Having thus said, he led me, by a pair of back-stairs, to a row of five or six rooms, one within another, which made the second story of one of the wings of the house, and which were pretty

modestly furnished. "You see, Sir," resumed he, "the lodging my Lord has assigned you; besides which, you will have a table of six dishes maintained at his expence; you will be waited on by his own servants, and there will always be a coach ready to attend you. Nor is this all," added he, "his Excellency has given me a strict charge, to shew you the same respect, and see you served with the same care, as if you were of the family of the Guzmans."

"What the duce means all this?" said I to myself. "How am I to take all these distinctions? Is there no roguery in it, and has not the minister a mind to divert himself a second time, by ordering me such an honourable treatment?" Whilst I was in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came to inform me, that the Count inquired for me. "Well, Santillane," said he, "are you satisfied with your apartment, and with the orders I have given to Don Raymond?" "Your Excellency's goodness," answered I, "seems to me extravagant, and I give way to it but with fear." "Why so?" replied he. "Can I do too much honour to a man, whom the King himself has intrusted to my care, and of whose advancement he has ordered me to be mindful? No, doubtless, I perform but my duty, in treating you honourably. Be no longer surprised then at what I do for you, and depend on it, that you shall not miss of a splendid and durable fortune, if you are but as devoted to me as you was to the Duke de Lerma."

"But

“ But now we are talking of that nobleman,” pursued he, “ they say you lived with him pretty familiarly ; I have a curiosity to know how you two came acquainted, and what post you was in at that minister’s ? Conceal nothing from me ; I require a sincere account from you.” I remembered then the perplexity I was in with the Duke de Lerma, in the like case, and how I extricated myself from it ; which I did now again very fortunately : that is, I softened in the relating such passages as sounded something harsh, and passed over slightly such places as redounded but little to my honour : I shewed also some regard to the Duke de Lerma, although I should have done my hearer more pleasure, in not sparing him in the least. As for Don Rodriguez de Calderona, I shewed him no mercy ; I enumerated all I knew of his fine exploits, in the traffic of commanderies, benefices, and governments.

“ What you tell me of Calderona,” said the minister, interrupting me, “ agrees very well with certain memorials that have been presented me against him, and which contain articles of yet greater importance. He will be brought very soon to his trial, and if you wish him to fall under this affair, I believe your wishes will be satisfied.” “ I do not desire his death, my Lord,” said I ; “ though it was no fault of his, that I did not meet with mine in the tower of Segovia, where he was the cause of my staying a pretty considerable time.” “ How !” cried his Excellency, “ was it Don Rodriguez who was the cause

of your imprisonment? That is what I did not before know. Don Balthazar, to whom Navarro has told your story, informed me indeed, that the late King had you confined, to punish you, for having carried the Prince of Spain one night into a suspicious place; but I know no more of it, neither can I imagine what part Calderona had in this play." "That of a lover," answered I, "who takes revenge of an enemy for an outrage received." At the same time, I related to him all the particulars of that adventure; which he thought so diverting, that, as grave as he was, he could not forbear laughing, or rather, crying for pleasure. Catalina, sometimes niece, and sometimes grand-daughter, delighted him extremely, as well as the share the Duke de Lerma had in that whole affair.

When I had ended my relation, the Count dismissed me, telling me, that he should not fail to employ me next day. I ran then immediately to the Hotel de Zuniga, to thank Don Balthazar for his good offices, and to give my friend Joseph an account how favourably the first minister was disposed to serve me.

CHAP. V.

Of the secret conference Gil Blas had with Navarro, and of the first business in which the Count d'Olivarez employed the former.

AS soon as I saw Joseph, I told him with some emotion, that I had abundance of news for him; upon which he carried me to a private

a private place, where, having informed him of all that had passed, I asked him what he thought of what he had heard. "I think," said he, "you are in a fair way to make a great fortune; every thing smiles upon you: you please the first minister; and, which ought not to be reckoned as nothing, I can render you the same service, as was done you by my uncle Melchior de la Ronda, when you entered the Archbishop of Grenada's palace. He spared you the pains of studying that prelate and his principal officers, in discovering to you their different humours; and I, after his example, will let you into the characters of the Count, the Countess his lady, and Donna Maria de Guzman their only child.

"The minister has a lively and penetrating wit, proper for forming great projects; he sets up for an universal genius, because he has a superficial insight into all sciences; and he believes himself capable of deciding every thing. He imagines himself a profound lawyer, a great captain, and a most refined politician. Add to this, that he is so opinionated of his own judgment, that he is bent upon always following it, preferably to that of any other whatsoever, for fear he should seem to submit to the understanding of any one. Under the rose, this weakness may have strange consequences, from which Heaven preserve the Spanish monarchy. He shines in the council by an eloquence that is natural to him, and would write as well as he speaks, did not he affect, in order to give more dignity to his style, to render it obscure and too

laboured. He is very singular in his thoughts, and besides that, capricious and whimsical : but then he is generous, and a very good friend. They say he is revengeful ; but what Spaniard is not so ? Besides that, they accuse him of ingratitude, for having caused the banishment of the Duke d'Uzeda, and Father Lewis Aliaga, to whom he had, as they say, very great obligations : this again must be forgiven him ; the desire of being prime minister excuses a man from being grateful.

“ Donna Agnez de Zuniga è Velasco, Countess d'Olivarez,” pursued Joseph, “ is a lady in whom I know but one defect, which is, her selling very dear all the favours that are obtained by her means. And as for Donna Maria de Guzman, (who, beyond dispute, is now the best match in Spain,) she is a most accomplished person, and her father's idol. Govern yourself accordingly : make your court well to these two ladies ; and seem yet more devoted to the Count d'Olivarez, than you was to the Duke de Lerma, before your journey to Segovia, and you will soon become a great and powerful man.

“ I advise you besides,” said he, “ to visit my master, Don Balthazar, from time to time ; though you have no longer need of him to advance you, do not cease to keep fair with him : you have gained his good opinion, preserve his esteem and friendship ; he may serve you upon occasion.” “ As the uncle and nephew,” said I to Navarro, “ govern the state between them, is there never a little jealousy between these two colleagues ?” “ On the contrary,”

contrary," answered he, "they live in the most perfect union. Had it not been for Don Balthazar, the Count d'Olivarez would not, perhaps, have been prime minister; for, in short, after the death of Philip III. all the friends and partizans of the house of Sandoval left no stone unturned, some to continue the Cardinal, and others to prefer his son; but my master, the most artful of all the courtiers, and the Count, who is not less subtle than he, broke all their measures; and took such right methods to secure this place to themselves, that they gained it from all their competitors. The Count d'Olivarez being thus become prime minister, has given a share in the administration to Don Balthazar, his uncle, leaving to him the foreign affairs, and reserving to himself those at home; so that strengthening thereby the ties of friendship, that ought naturally to bind persons of the same blood, these two noblemen, independent of each other, live in a good intelligence that seems unalterable."

Such was the conversation I had with Joseph, which I hoped, in time, to make advantage of; after which, I went and thanked Signior de Zuniga for what he had the goodness to do for me. He answered me very civilly, that he would lay hold on all opportunities, that should offer, to serve me; and that he was very glad I was satisfied with his nephew, to whom he assured me, he would speak again in my favour; being willing thereby, at least, said he, to let me see he had my interest at heart, and that, instead of one protector,

teſtor, I had got two. Thus did Don Balthazar, through his friendship for Navarro, intereſt himſelf in the advancement of my fortune.

That very evening I left my ready-furniſhed lodging, and went and took poſſeſſion of my apartment at the prime miniſter's, where I ſupped with Scipio. We were both waited upon during that time, by his Excellency's own domeſtics, who, whiſt we affected to put on an impoſing gravity, laughed perhaps in their ſleeves, at the inforced reſpect they paid us, only by another's orders. When the cloth was taken away, and they were retired, my ſecretary ceaſing any longer to put any constraint upon himſelf, ſaid a thouſand pleaſant things to me, with which his gay humour and his hopes inſpired him. As for my own part, though I was really charmed with the ſplendid ſituation wherein I began to ſee myſelf, I did not find in myſelf any diſpoſition to ſuffer it to dazzle my ſenſes. Accordingly, as ſoon as I was in bed, I fell quietly aſleep, without giving way in my mind to the flattering ideas, with which I might have ſoothed my imagination very agreeably. On the contrary, the ambitious Scipio hardly ſlept a wink; he ſpent above half the night in hoarding up riches to marry his daughter Seraphina.

I had ſcarce got my clothes on next morning, before his Excellency ſent for me. I haſtened away to him immediately, and bowing to him with great reſpect when I entered the room, "Come on, Santillane," ſaid he, with a ſmile, "let us ſee a little what you
can

can do. You have told me, that the Duke de Lerma used to employ you in drawing up memorials. • I have now one which I design you for a trial of your skill; I am going to tell you the subject; the business is to compose an artful piece, which may prepossess the public in favour of my administration. I have already spread about a report that I found all things in great disorder; we must now set before the eyes of the court and city the miserable condition to which the monarch is reduced; to this end you must sketch out a picture which may strike the people, and prevent their regretting my predecessor: after this you shall extol the measures I have taken, to render his Majesty's reign glorious, his dominions flourishing, and his subjects perfectly happy."

When my Lord had explained himself in this manner, he put into my hands a paper, containing the just reasons there were of complaint against the former administration; and I remember they consisted of ten articles, the least important of which were sufficient to alarm all good Spaniards; then making me go into a little closet adjoining to his, he left me to work at liberty. I began then to draw up my memorial with all the little art whereof I was master: first, I set forth the wretched condition to which the kingdom was reduced; the finances wasted, the royal revenues mortgaged to farmers, and the navy ruined: then I enumerated the mistakes committed in the last reign, and the fatal consequences that might ensue; in short, I represented the whole kingdom in danger, and censured so sharply the
the

the former administration, that the removal of the Duke de Lerma, according to my account, was the greatest good luck that could have happened to Spain. To confess the truth, although I had then no resentment remaining against that nobleman, I was not at all displeased at having it in my power to do him this good office ; such is the nature of mankind.

At last, after a dreadful representation of the calamities wherewith Spain was threatened, I dispelled the people's fears, by giving them a pleasing prospect of great things for the future. I made the Count d'Olivarez speak like a redeemer sent from Heaven, for the preservation of the Spanish monarchy ; I promised mountains and wonders ; in short, I entered so well into the views of the new minister, that, on his reading the whole performance, he seemed infinitely surpris'd at it. " Do you know, Santillane," said he, " that you have composed a piece worthy of a secretary of state ? I no longer wonder the Duke de Lerma exercised your pen : your style is not only concise, but even elegant ; only I think it a little too easy. At the same time pointing out to me the places that were not to his fancy, he changed them ; and I judged by his corrections that what Navarro had told me, of his loving far-fetched thoughts, and obscure expressions, was no more than the truth. Nevertheless, although he loved a sublime, or, to speak more properly, an affected style, he still preserved about two thirds of my memorial ; and, to let me see how well pleased he was therewith,

-sent

sent me three hundred pistoles by Don Raymond, just as I had done dinner.

C H A P. VI.

What use Gil Blas made of his three hundred pistoles, and on what business he sent Scipio. The success of the memorial mentioned in the foregoing chapter.

THIS present of the minister's afforded Scipio new matter to congratulate me on my being come to court : " You see," said he, " that fortune has great things in store for you ; are you now sorry you have left your retirement ? Long live the Count d'Olivarez ! He is quite another sort of a patron than his predecessor. The Duke de Lerma, though you was entirely devoted to him, suffered you to languish several months without giving you one pistole ; but the Count has already made you a present, which you durst not have hoped for till after long service.

I could wish," added he, " that the Lords of Leyva were witnesses of the happiness you enjoy, or at least that they were informed of it. " It is time to acquaint them therewith," answered I ; " and I was just thinking to mention it to you : I doubt not but they are very impatient to hear from me ; but before I would send to them, I was willing to wait till I was settled, and could apprise them positively, whether I should stay at court or not. Now that I am assured what I have to trust to, you have nothing to do but to set out for Valencia when you will, to inform those noblemen

blemen of my present situation : which I look upon as the work of their hands ; since it is certain that had it not been for them, I should never have resolved upon taking a journey to Madrid. “ My dear master,” cried the son of Coscolina, “ with what joy shall I fill them, on acquainting them with what has befallen you ? Why am not I already at the gates of Valencia ? but I shall be there very soon ; Don Alphonso’s two horses are in very good order for a journey ; I will set out forthwith with one of his Excellency’s footmen. Besides that, I shall be glad to have a companion upon the road ; you know that the livery of a prime minister dazzles people’s eyes.”

I could not forbear laughing at my secretary’s foolish vanity ; and nevertheless being myself yet perhaps more vain even than he, I suffered him to do just what he would. “ Set out,” says I, “ directly, and make all possible haste back, for I have other business to employ you about. I intend to send you to Asturia, to carry some money to my mother. I have through negligence let the time slip, in which I promised to return her a hundred pistoles, which you took upon you to deliver yourself into her own hands. Promises of this nature ought to be so sacred to a son, that I cannot help reproaching myself with my remissness in keeping them.” “ Sir,” answered Scipio, “ in six weeks I will give you a good account of both these affairs ; in that time I shall have spoken to the Lords of Leyva, taken a trip to your country-seat, and seen the city of Oviedo, which I can never call

call to mind, without wishing three quarters and half of its inhabitants at the devil." I told out then a hundred pistoles to Coscolina's son, for my mother's allowance, and a hundred more for himself, being willing he should perform with pleasure the long journey he was going to undertake.

Some days after his departure, his Excellency had our memorial printed; which was no sooner published, than it became the subject of all the conversation at Madrid. The people, who are always fond of novelties, were charmed with the performance; the exhausting of the finances, which was painted in lively colours, exasperated them against the Duke of Lerma; and, notwithstanding the malicious strokes levelled against that minister were not applauded by every one, at least they found many admirers. As for the magnificent promises made there, by the Count d'Olivarez, and, amongst others, that of supplying the expences of the state by a prudent oeconomy, without laying any fresh burdens upon the subjects, they dazzled the senses of all the citizens in general, and confirmed them in the great opinion they had already imbibed of his understanding; insomuch that the whole city resounded with his praises.

This artful minister, finding he had obtained his aim by this piece, which had been written only to gain the affection of the public, resolved truly to deserve it, by an action highly praise-worthy, and which was, at the same time, of great service to the King. - To this end, he had recourse to the invention, of the

Emperor Galba, that is, he compelled all those persons who had enriched themselves (God knows how) in the administration of the public treasure, to refund their ill-gotten gains. When he had drawn from these bloodsuckers that blood they had drained from the vitals of the poor, and had filled therewith the royal coffers, he undertook to keep it there, by causing all pensions to be taken away, (without excepting even his own,) as well as all gratuities that were made out of the Prince's treasure. That he might succeed in this design, which he could not put in execution, without entirely changing the face of the government, he ordered me to draw up another memorial, the form and substance whereof he told me. This done, he charged me to rise as much as possibly I could above the usual plainness of my style, in order to give more nobleness to my phrases. "It is sufficient, my Lord," said I; "your Excellency would have the sublime and the luminous you shall be satisfied." I shut myself up then in the same closet where I had worked before and there set about this lofty piece, after having thrice invoked the eloquent genius of the Archbishop of Grenada.

I began by representing, that all the money in the royal treasury ought to be preserved there inviolably, and only be employed for the urgent necessities of the kingdom; and being a sacred fund, which it was proper to reserve, to keep the enemies of Spain in awe. Then I shewed his Majesty, (for this memorial was addressed to him,) that although he should

should abolish all pensions and gratuities that issued out of his ordinary revenues, he would not thereby deprive himself of the pleasure of rewarding such of his subjects as should render themselves worthy of his favours ; because that, without touching his treasure, he was still able to give considerable gratifications : that for some he had viceroyalties, governments, orders of knighthood, and commissions in the army ; for others, commanderies, and pensions upon those commanderies, titles, and magistracies ; and lastly, all sorts of benefices for persons consecrated to the service of the altar.

This memorial, which was much longer than the former, took me up almost three days ; but fortunately I did it to my master's fancy ; for finding it written with emphasis, and stuffed out with metaphors, he loaded me with praises. " Aye !" says he, " this pleases me," pointing to the most sounding passages ; " these," continues he, " are expressions of the right stamp : Courage, my boy, I foresee you will be of great service to me." However, notwithstanding these applauses of which he was so lavish, he did not fail to touch up this very memorial. He even inserted abundance of his own therein, and, in short, made it such a finished piece of eloquence, as charmed both the King, and the whole court. The city added also their approbation, prophesied great things for the future, and flattered themselves that the Spanish monarchy would recover its pristine lustre, under the ministry of so great a man. His Excellency, finding that this piece re-

dounded highly to his honour, was willing that I should reap some advantage from it, for the share I had therein. He gave me a pension of five hundred crowns upon the commandery of Castile; which was so much the more agreeable to me, as it was not the purchase of any villany, though I had gotten it pretty easily.

CHAP. VII.

By what chance, in what place, and in what condition, Gil Blas met again his friend Fabricio, and the conversation they had together.

Nothing gave the Count more pleasure, than to hear what the people of Madrid thought of his behaviour in his ministry; he would ask me every day what the world said of him; he even kept several spies in pay, who gave him an exact account of all that passed in the city. They related to him even the most trifling discourses they heard; and as he commanded them to be sincere, his self-love suffered terribly sometimes; for the common people have an intemperance of tongue which respects nothing.

When I found the Count loved to hear the talk of the town, I used myself to go after dinner to public places, and even to join in conversation with gentlemen, when I met with any such. When the discourse turned upon state affairs, I listened to them with great attention; and if they said any thing that was worthy of his Excellency's hearing, I did not fail to inform him of it. But it must

must be observed, that I never told him any thing that was not to his advantage.

One day, as I was returning from one of these places, I passed by the gate of an hospital, and the fancy took me to enter in. I went through two or three wards full of sick people who kept their beds, casting my eyes on every side; when amongst these wretches, whom I did not look upon without compassion, I saw one which struck me with infinite surprise: I thought I traced in his face the features of Fabricio, my old comrade, and countryman. In order to take a nearer view of him, I approached his bed, and not being able any longer to doubt but it was the poet Nunez, I stood some moments looking upon him, without uttering one syllable. On the other hand, he remembered me also, and eyed me in the same manner. At last, breaking silence, "Are not my eyes deceived?" said I; "and is it really Fabricio whom I see here?" "It is even so," answered he, coldly, "neither need you be surprised at it. Ever since I-left you, I have constantly followed the profession of an author; I have written both romances, and plays, and, in short, all sorts of ingenious productions; I have run my course; I am at the hospital."

I could not forbear laughing at these words; and yet more at the serious air with which he had spoken them. "What!" said I, "has your muse brought you into this place! has she played you that scurvy trick!" "You see how it is," answered he; "this house often serves as a receptacle to wits and poets. You

was very much in the right of it, my boy, to take another course; but, I think, you are no longer at court; the face of affairs is changed with you also; I even remember that I heard you was imprisoned by the King's order." "You was told the truth," answered I; "the charming situation wherein you left me, was followed soon after by a reverse of fortune, which deprived me both of my riches and my liberty: nevertheless, friend, you now see me again in a more splendid condition, than that wherein you beheld me formerly." "That is impossible," cried Nunez; "your behaviour is sober and modest; you have no longer that vain and insolent air, which usually attends prosperity." "Misfortunes," replied I, "have purified my virtue; and I have learned, in the school of adversity, to enjoy riches, without suffering myself to be influenced or puffed up by them."

"Tell me then," said Fabricio, interrupting me, and sitting upright with transport in his bed: "What employment are you in? What business do you now follow? Are not you steward to some great ruined Lord, or to some rich widow?" "I have a better post," answered I; "but I beg you would excuse me from telling you any more at present, I will satisfy your curiosity at another opportunity. I will content myself for this time with informing you, that it is in my power to do you some service; or rather, to provide for you handsomely for the rest of your days, on condition you will promise me never more to turn author, either in verse or prose. Do you

you think yourself capable of making me so great a sacrifice?" "I have already made that sacrifice to heaven," replied he, "in a dangerous sickness, from which you see me just escaped. A Dominican friar has obliged me to abjure poetry, as an amusement, which if it be not criminal, at least diverts us from the ways of virtue." "I congratulate you thereupon," resumed I, "my dear Nunez; but beware of a relapse." "That is what I do not in the least apprehend," rejoined he; "I have taken a firm resolution to abandon the muses; insomuch that when you entered this ward, I was making some verses to bid them eternally adieu." "Signior Fabricio," said I then, shaking my head, "I know not whether the Dominican and I ought to rely upon your abjuration; you seem to me prodigiously smitten with those learned virgins." "No, no," answered he, "I have broken all the ties that bound me to them; I have done yet more, I have taken an aversion to the public; they do not deserve to have authors devote their labours to them; I should be sorry to write any thing that should please them. Think not," continued he, "that this language proceeds from vexation; I speak it in cool blood; I despise as much the applauses of the public as their hissing. There is no knowing who wins or who loses with them; they are a pack of capricious giddy wretches, who think one way to-day, and will think another to-morrow. What fools are dramatic poets to be vain of their pieces when they succeed! Whatever noise they make

make whilst they are new, let them but be acted twenty years afterwards, they generally meet but with an indifferent reception. The present generation accuses the former age of having an ill taste ; and their own will be called in question in its turn, by those who live in the next century : From hence I conclude, that the authors who are applauded at present, must expect to be hissed hereafter. It is the very same case with romances, and all other diverting books that are published ; notwithstanding they may at first meet with general approbation, they come insensibly to be despised : the reputation then we gain by the success of any performance, is but a mere chimera ; an illusion of the mind ; and a blaze of straw ; the smoke of which is soon dispersed in the air."

Though I rightly judged the poet of the Asturias only spoke thus, because he had met with some disappointments, I did not seem to take any notice of it. " I am overjoyed," said I, " that thou art disgusted with the profession of a wit, and entirely cured of the frenzy of writing. Thou mayst depend upon it, I will soon get thee an employment wherein thou wilt be able to enrich thyself, without being obliged to be at any great expence of genius." " So much the better," cried he ; " I abhor wit, and now look upon it as the most fatal present heaven can bestow upon mankind." " I wish," replied I, " my dear Fabricio, thou mayst always continue in the same mind ; if thou persevere in resolving to abandon poetry, I repeat it to thee again, I will soon

soon procure thee a creditable and profitable post; but in thee mean while, until I do thee that service," continued I, presenting him a purse wherein there were threescore pistoles, "I beg thee receive this little token of my friendship."

"O generous friend!" cried the son of the barbar Nunez, quite transported with joy and gratitude; "what thanks ought I to return heaven for having put it in your head to enter this hospital, from whence I shall depart this very day by your assistance?" In effect, he got himself removed to a ready-furnished lodging; but before we parted, I told him my abode, and invited him to come and see me, as soon as his health should be entirely restored. He seemed infinitely surprised on hearing that I lived with the Count d'Olivarez: "O thrice happy Gil Blas!" said he, "whose fortune it is to be agreeable to the ministers of state; I rejoice at thy prosperity, since thou makest so good a use of it."

C H A P. VIII.

Gil Blas grows daily dearer and dearer to his master: Scipio returns to Madrid; what account he gave of his journey to Santillane.

COUNT d'Olivarez, whom I shall call for the future the *Count-duke*, because it pleased the King about this time to honour him with that title, had a weakness which I soon discovered to my advantage; it was this, he was fond of being beloved. As soon as he perceived any one devote himself to his service through inclination, he immediately received

ceived him into his favour. I took care not to neglect this observation; not content with performing well whatever he commanded, I executed all his orders with a zeal that charmed him; and studied his fancy in every thing, that I might conform myself to it, and anticipate his desires as much as possible.

By this behaviour, by which a man seldom fails of gaining his point, I became insensibly my master's favourite: I even insinuated myself so far into his good graces, that I shared his confidence with Signior Carnero, his first secretary; and he, for his part, as I had the same blind-side myself, entirely won my heart, by giving me continual proofs of his affection.

Carnero had taken the same course as myself to please his Excellency; and had succeeded so well therein, that he communicated to him the mysteries of the cabinet. This secretary then, and myself, were the prime minister's two confidants, and the depositaries of his secrets; with this difference, that he only conferred with Carnero about state-affairs, and that he never talked with me but about his own private concerns: this made, as it were, two distinct divisions, with which we were each of us equally satisfied. We lived together without jealousy, and without friendship. I had reason to be contented with my place, which giving me an opportunity of being continually with the Count-duke, placed me in a convenient station to discover the very bottom of his heart, which (as great a master of dissimulation as he naturally was) he
ceased

ceased to conceal from me, as soon as he no longer questioned the sincerity of my zeal for his service.

“ Santillane,” said he to me one day, “ you have seen the Duke of Lerma, possessed of an authority, more like that of an absolute monarch, than that of a favourite minister ; nevertheless, I am yet happier than he was, even when at the highest pitch of his grandeur and fortune. He had two formidable enemies in the Duke d’Uzeda, his own son, and in Philip III.’s confessor ; whereas I see nobody about the King, who has credit enough to injure me, or even whom I suspect of bearing me any ill-will.

“ It is true,” pursued he, “ on my advancement to the ministry, I took great care to suffer no persons about his Majesty, but such as are tied to me either by blood or friendship. I have removed, either by viceroyalties, or embassies, all the noblemen, who, by their personal merit, might have deprived me of part of my sovereign’s good graces ; which I am resolved to ingross wholly without a rival : insomuch that I can now say, there is not one grandee, whose interest comes in the least in competition with mine. You see, Gil Blas,” added he, “ that I disclose my heart to you ; as I have reason to think you entirely devoted to me, I have chosen you for my confidant. You do not want wit, and I believe you sober, prudent, and discreet ; in a word, you seem to me very fit to perform dexterously twenty sorts of commissions, which require a
young

young fellow of a quick understanding, and one who is entirely in my interests."

I was not proof against the pleasing ideas which these words brought into my mind; some fumes of avarice and ambition flew up into my head, and awakened in me such sentiments as I before thought I had absolutely triumphed over. I protested then to the minister, that I would endeavour to answer his expectations to the utmost of my power; and accordingly prepared myself to execute, without scruple, any orders he should think proper to give me.

Whilst I was thus disposed to erect new altars to the blind goddess Fortune, Scipio returned from his journey. "I have no long recital to make you," said he; "I have overjoyed the Lords of Leyva, in acquainting them with the reception the King gave you, as soon as he knew you, and the kind treatment you met with from the Count d'Olivarez."

At these words I interrupted Scipio; "You would have pleased them yet more, my boy," said I, "if you had told them upon what foot I am now with his Excellency; it is almost incredible, what a rapid progress I have made in his favour since your departure." "God be thanked, my dear master;" answered he, "I foresee we shall have a fine course to run."

"Let us change the subject," said I, "and pass on to Oviedo. You have been in the Asturias; in what condition have you left my mother there?" "Ah! Sir," answered he,

he, putting on a mournful air, "I have nothing but ill news for you from that quarter." "O heavens!" cried I, "my mother is certainly dead!" "Six months ago," replied Scipio, "the good dame paid that debt to nature, as well as Signior Gil Perez, your uncle."

The loss of my mother afflicted me very sensibly, although I had never received from her those caresses in my infancy, of which children generally stand in great need, to make them grateful when they grow up. I bestowed also upon the good canon, the tears I owed him, for the care he had taken of my education. My grief indeed did not last long, but degenerated very soon into that tender remembrance which I have always retained of my parents.

C H A P. IX.

How, and to whom the Count-duke married his only daughter; the bitter fruits this marriage produced.

NOT long after the return of Coscolina's son, the Count-duke fell into a reverie, wherein he remained buried for above a week. I imagined he was meditating some masterpiece of state-policy; but I was mistaken; what he was revolving in his thoughts related only to his own family. "Gil Blas," said he to me one afternoon, "you must have perceived that I am perplexed in my mind; yes, my lad, my head is entirely taken up with an affair, on which the whole repose of my life

depends : I will venture to intrust you with it.

“ Donna Maria, my daughter, is marriageable,” pursued he ; “ and there are abundance of young noblemen who dispute her with each other. The Count de Niebles, however, eldest son to the Duke de Medina Sidonia, the head of the family of the Guzmans, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son to the Marquis de Carpio, and my eldest sister, are the two competitors who seem to have the most right to obtain the preference. The latter especially, is of a merit so much superiour to any of his rivals, that nobody in the whole court in the least doubts, but I shall chuse him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into my reasons for rejecting him, as well as the Count de Niebles, I must tell you I have cast my eyes upon Don Ramirez de Guzman, Marquis de Toral, and head of the family of the Guzmans of Abrados. It is to this young nobleman, and the children he shall have by my daughter, I design to leave all my substance ; to which I will add the title of Count d'Olivarez, and the dignity of a grandee, which shall go along with the estate ; inso-much that my grandchildren, and their heirs, descended from the branch of Abrados, and that of Olivarez, shall pass for the eldest branch of the family of the Guzmans.

“ Well, Santillane,” said he, “ do not you approve of my design ?” “ Pardon me, my Lord,” answered I ; “ this scheme is worthy of the genius that formed it ; all I fear is that the Duke of Medina Sidonia may mur-

mu

mur at it." "Let him murmur if he pleases," replied the minister, "I trouble myself very little about that. I do not love his branch, which has usurped the right of eldership, and the titles thereunto annexed, from the house of Abrados. I shall be less moved with his complaints, than with the vexation of my sister the Marchioness de Carpio, on seeing her son miss my daughter: but no matter, I will please myself, and Don Ramirez shall get the better of his rivals; it is a thing resolved on."

Though the Count-duke had taken this resolution, he did not execute it without giving a new specimen of his singular policy. He presented a memorial to the King, wherein he begged him and the Queen, to take upon themselves the trouble of marrying his daughter; he then set forth the qualifications of the several noblemen who courted her, and left the choice entirely to their Majesties: but he did not fail when he mentioned the Marquis de Toral, to let them see plainly, that he was the person that would be the most agreeable to him. Accordingly the King, who had a blind complaisance for his minister, made him this answer, "I think Don Ramirez Nunez worthy of Donna Maria; nevertheless chuse for yourself: the person upon whom you pitch, shall be sure to be the most agreeable to me,

The KING."

The minister affected to shew this answer; and pretending to look upon it as an order from his sovereign, hastened the nuptials of

his daughter with the Marquis de Toral ; which stung to the quick the Marchioness de Carpio, and likewise all the Guzmans, who had flattered themselves with the hopes of marrying Donna Maria. Nevertheless, neither the one nor the other being able to prevent this wedding, affected to celebrate it with the greatest demonstrations of joy : one would have sworn that all the family were delighted therewith ; but they who had been dissatisfied with the match, soon saw themselves revenged upon the Count-duke, in the most cruel manner. Donna Maria was delivered at ten months end of a daughter, which died as soon as it was born, and was followed, within a few days afterwards, by its mother.

What a loss was this for a father, who had no eyes (if I may use that expression) but for his daughter, and who saw himself thereby defeated in his design of depriving the branch of Medina Sidonia of the right of eldership ! He was so sensibly afflicted thereat, that he shut himself up for some days, and would see nobody but me ; whilst I, conforming myself to his lively sorrow, seemed full as much grieved as him. To confess the truth, I took hold of this opportunity, to bestow some fresh tears upon the memory of Antonia : the similitude there was between her death, and that of the Marchioness de Toral, opened anew a wound that was but ill closed ; and disposed me to take on so heartily, that the minister, as much overwhelmed with sorrow as he was, could not help being surpris'd at mine. He was astonish'd to the last degree, to see me sympathise

sympathise so zealously with his affliction. "Gil Blas," said he to me one day, when I seemed buried in a profound melancholy, "it is a very pleasing consolation to me, to have a confident who is so sensible of my sufferings."

"Ah ! my Lord," answered I, giving him all the honour of my grief, "I must be very ungrateful, and very hard-hearted, if I were not sensibly affected therewith. Can I remember that you mourn a daughter of such consummate merit, and whom you loved so tenderly, without intermingling my tears with yours ? No, my Lord, I am too full of your goodness, not to share, during my whole life, in all your pleasures and all your pains."

CHAP. X.

Gil Blas meets the poet Nunez, by chance, who informs him, that he has writ a tragedy, which is soon to be acted at the Prince's theatre. The ill success of this piece ; and the astonishing good fortune with which it was followed.

THE minister began in time to be comforted, and consequently I was not long a-recovering my good humour, when one evening I went out alone in my coach to take the air. I had not gone very far, before I met the poet of the Asturias, whom I had never seen since his leaving the hospital. As he was dressed very genteelly, I called to him, and taking him into my coach, we went together to St. Jerom's meadow.

"I am very fortunate, Mr. Nunez," said I, "in having met you thus by chance ; o-

therwise

therwise I should not have had the pleasure of your good company." "No reproaches, Santillane," cried he, interrupting me hastily; "I will confess to you honestly, that I did not design to visit you, and am going to tell you the reason. You promised me a good place, provided I would renounce poetry, and I have met with a very advantageous one, on condition that I will continue to make verses: I accepted therefore of the latter, as most agreeable to my humour. One of my friends has helped me to Don Bertrand Gomez de Ribero, treasurer of the King's galleys. This Don Bertrand, who has resolved to have a wit in his service, being charmed with the liveliness of my versification, has chosen me preferably to five or six authors, who stood candidates for the post of secretary of his orders."

"I am glad of it, my dear Fabricio," said I, "for this Don Bertrand must certainly be very rich." "Rich!" answered he, "they say he knows no end of his wealth: however that be, this is the business he employs me in. As he values himself upon being gallant, he keeps up a correspondence, by letters, with several very witty ladies; and I lend him my pen to compose billet-doux full of life and fire. I write for him to one in verse, to another in prose; and sometimes I even carry the letters myself, to shew the variety of my talents."

"But you do not tell me," said I, "what I want most to know: does he pay you well for your epistolary epigrams?" "Very liberally," answered he, "though the rich are not always generous; and I know some who are
arrant

arrant misers ; but Don Bertrand uses me very nobly. Besides a settled salary of two hundred pistoles *per annum*, he makes me several little presents, from time to time ; which enable me to act the lord, and pass my time well with some authors, as great enemies to melancholy, as myself." "But is your treasurer a sufficient judge," replied I, "to discover all the beauties and defects of a piece of poetry?" "Far from it," answered Nunez ; "although he has an imposing way of talking, he is no critic : he sets up, however, for a Tarpa ; passes sentence very decisively ; and maintains his opinion so haughtily, and so obstinately, that for the most part, whenever he disputes, his opponents are forced to submit, in order to avoid a torrent of disobliging language, with which he uses to run down all who dare contradict him."

"You may well believe," pursued he, "that I take great care never to thwart him, whatever room he gives me for it ; for besides the disagreeable epithets I should not fail to draw upon myself, I might very well get myself turned out of doors : I approve then prudently whatever he praises, and disapprove whatever he discommends. By this complaisance, which costs me nothing, (being master, as I am, of the art of conforming myself to the tempers of those who are of service to me,) I have gained both the esteem and friendship of my patron. He has engaged me to write a tragedy, of which he himself gave me the plan ; I have done it under his very nose, and
if

if it succeeds, shall owe part of my reputation to his good advice."

I asked our poet the name of his tragedy; he told me, *The Count de Saldagne*, and that it would be acted in three days, at the Prince's theatre. "I wish," said I, "it may have a great run, and I have a good enough opinion of your genius to hope it." "I hope so likewise," answered he; "but there is nothing more deceitful than hopes of this nature; for uncertain are authors of the issue of any dramatic performance."

At last, the day came whereon it was to be acted; but I could not go to the playhouse myself, his Excellency having employed me about an affair that prevented me: all I could do then was to send Scipio in my stead, that I might know that very night the fate of a piece, for whose success I was concerned. After having expected him for some time impatiently, I saw him return with an air that I took for an ill omen. "Well," said I, "how has the Count de Saldagne been received by the public?" "Very brutishly," answered he; "never was a piece more cruelly treated: for my part, I came away exasperated at the insolence of the pit." "And I am as much provoked," replied I, "at the frenzy of Nunez, in writing for the stage: must not he have lost his senses, to prefer the ignominious hootings of the spectators, to the happy state that I could procure him? Thus did I, out of friendship, rail against the poet of the Asturias, and vex at the ill success of his piece, whilst he, on the contrary, was hugging himself for it.

In

In effect, he entered my apartment two days afterwards, quite transported with joy. "Santillane," cried he, "I am come to let you share in my raptures; I have made my fortune, by writing an execrable play: you know the strange reception the Count de Saldagne met with from the public: all the audience strove who should ridicule and damn it most: and it is to their unanimous inveteracy in damning it, that I am indebted for the future happiness of my life."

I was sufficiently surprised to hear Nunez talk in this manner: "How! Fabricio," said I, "is it possible the miscarriage of your tragedy should be able to justify your immoderate joy?" "Yes, doubtless," answered he; "I have already told you, that Don Bertrand had put some of his own strokes in my piece; and consequently he thought it excellent; wherefore he has been stung to the quick, on finding the audience of a contrary opinion. "Nunez," said he to me this morning: [*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*] If your play has been disliked by the public, to make you amends, it pleases me, and that ought to satisfy you: to comfort you for the wretched taste of the age, I will settle upon you a rent-charge of two thousand crowns a-year, payable out of my estate; let us go directly to my lawyer, and execute the writings." We went accordingly; the treasurer has signed the deed of gift, and paid me down the first year's income beforehand."

I congratulated Fabricio upon the ill success of the Count de Saldagne, since it had
turned:

turned to the advantage of the author. "You are very much in the right of it," continued he, "to compliment me thereupon; how happy am I in having been hissed to some purpose! If the public, more favourable, had honoured me with their applauses, what would that have availed me? Nothing: I might have got but a trifling sum by my labours; whereas their hissing has provided for me handsomely at once for the rest of my days.

C H A P. XI.

Santillane procures an employment for Scipio, who sets out for New Spain.

MY secretary could not think, without envy, on the unexpected good fortune of the poet Nunez; he talked to me of nothing else for above a week: "I am surprised," said he, "at the caprice of Fortune; who sometimes delights in loading an execrable author with favours, whilst she leaves good writers to perish for want. I wish she would take it in her head to enrich me likewise, in a night's time." "That may very well happen," answered I, "and even before you think of it. You are here in her temple: for, methinks, one may call a first minister's house, the temple of fortune, wherein favours are often granted, which are at once the making of those who obtain them." "That is very true, Sir," replied he, "but one must have the patience to wait for them." "Once again," said I, "Scipio, I desire you would be easy; perhaps you
are

are even now upon the point of having some good post." In effect, a few days after, an opportunity offered of employing him advantageously for the Count-duke's service, and I did not let it slip.

I was talking one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, steward to the first minister; and our conversation turned upon his Excellency's revenues. "My Lord," said he, "is possessed of commanderies of all the military orders, which are worth to him forty thousand crowns a-year, and he is only obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara. Besides, his three places of great chamberlane, master of the horse, and great chancellor of the Indies, bring him in yearly two hundred thousand crowns; and yet all this is nothing in comparison of the immense sums he receives from the Indies: do you know how? When the King's ships set out from Lisbon, or from Seville, for those countries, he puts aboard them a cargo of corn, wine, and oil, the product of his county of Olivarez, for all which he pays no freight. Then he sells this merchandise in the Indies for four times as much as it is worth in Spain; after which, he lays out the money in spices, colours, and other things, that cost little or nothing in the New World, but fetch a vast price in Europe: he has already gained several millions by this traffick, without doing the least injustice to the King. And what will seem not a little surprising to you, is, that all the persons employed in carrying on this trade, come home laden also with riches; my Lord allowing them

them to make their own fortunes, as well as his."

Coscolina's son, who hearkened to all this discourse, could not hear Don Raymond speak thus, without interrupting him. "Faith, Signior Caporis," cried he, "I should be glad to be one of those persons; besides, I have long had a desire to see Mexico." "Your curiosity shall be soon satisfied," said the steward, "if the Signior de Santillane does not oppose it. As nice as I am in my choice of the persons I send to the Indies to manage this trade, (for it is I that send them), I will put you without scruple upon my list, if your master pleases." "You will oblige me," said I to Don Raymond, "in giving me this proof of your friendship. Scipio is a young fellow whom I value, and does not want sense: besides, he will behave himself after such a manner, that there will not be the least room to reproach him; in a word, I will answer for him, as I would for myself."

"If it be so," answered Caporis, "he need only go directly to Seville; the vessels are to sail in a month for the Indies. I will charge him, at his departure, with a letter to a man, who will give him all the instructions necessary for enriching himself, without doing the least prejudice to the interests of his Excellency, which he must look upon as sacred."

Scipio, overjoyed at having obtained this employment, made haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns which I advanced him, to buy wine and oil in Andalusia, and

and enable him to trade upon his own account in the Indies. Nevertheless, as glad as he was to make a voyage, whence he hoped to derive so much gain, he could not leave me without shedding tears, neither did I see him set out without some concern.

C H A P. XII.

Don Alphonso de Leyva comes to Madrid ; the reason of his journey ; the affliction it caused Gil Blas, and the joy with which it was followed.

I Had hardly lost Scipio, when a page of the minister's brought me a note, which contained only these words: " If the Signior de Santillane will take the trouble of coming to the image of St. Gabriel, in the Toledo street, he will there find one of his best friends."

" What friend can this be, that does not subscribe his name," said I to myself? " Why does he conceal himself? Undoubtedly he intends to please me by surprising me." I went thither then immediately, and on entering the house, was not a little astonished to meet there Don Alphonso de Leyva. " What do I see?" cried I. " Are you here, my Lord!" " Yes, my dear Gil Blas," answered he, clasping me close within his arms; " it is certainly Don Alphonso himself whom you behold." " Ha! what has brought you to Madrid?" said I. " It will both surprise and afflict you," answered he, " to tell you the motive of my journey. The government of Valencia is taken from me, and the minister has sent for me to court to

give an account of my behaviour." On hearing this, I remained a quarter of an hour in a stupid silence ; then resuming the discourse : " Of what are you accused ?" said I. " That is what I do not know," answered he ; " but I attribute my disgrace to a visit I made three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who has been confined about a month to his castle at Denia."

" O, without dispute, you are in the right," said I interrupting him, " to ascribe your misfortune to this indiscreet visit ; look for no other cause ; and suffer me to tell you, that you did not consult your usual prudence, when you went to see that disgraced minister." " The thing is done," said he, " and I have taken my resolution with a good grace : I am going to retire, with my family, to the castle of Leyva, where I will pass the rest of my days in a profound tranquillity. All that gives me any uneasiness," pursued he, " is, to be obliged to appear before a haughty minister, who may happen to receive me very disagreeably ; what a mortification is that to a Spaniard ! Nevertheless, it is absolutely necessary ; but I was willing to speak with you, before I submitted to it." " My Lord," said I, " do not appear before the minister until I have learned what you are accused of ; the misfortune perhaps may be remedied. However that be, allow me, if you please, to do all in your favour that gratitude and friendship require of me." This said, I left him at his inn, with an assurance that he should hear from me very soon.

As

As I no longer meddled with state-affairs, since the two memorials, of which so eloquent mention has been made, I went to Carnero, and asked him, if it was true, that the government of Valencia was taken from Don Alphonso de Leyva. He told me, Yes, but that he did not know the reason. Hereupon, without hesitation, I took the resolution to address myself to his Excellency himself, and know from his own mouth, what cause he had to complain of Don Cæsar's son.

I was so much concerned at this unlucky accident, that I had no need to affect a melancholy air, in order to seem dejected to the eyes of the Count-Duke. "What is the matter, Santillane?" said he, as soon as he beheld me. "I perceive the marks of sorrow upon your face, and even see the tears ready to trickle down your cheeks. Has any one injured you? speak; you shall soon be revenged." "My Lord," answered I, letting fall some tears, "though I should have a mind to conceal my trouble from you, it would not be in my power; I am grieved to the last degree. I have just heard, that Don Alphonso de Leyva is no longer governour of Valencia; it was impossible to tell me any news that would have caused me a more sensible affliction." "What sayest thou, Gil Blas?" cried the minister, in a surprise. "What interest can you have in this Don Alphonso, or in his government?" I then gave him an account of the obligations I had to the Lords of Leyva; after which I inform-

ed him, how I had obtained that very government of the Duke of Lerma, for Don Cæsar's son.

When his Excellency had heard me out, with an attention full of goodness: "Dry up your tears, my lad," said he; "besides my being ignorant of what you have just told me, I confess I looked upon Don Alphonso as a creature of the Duke of Lerma's. Put yourself in my place; would not the visit he made his Eminence have rendered him suspected by you? I am willing to believe, however, that having received his post from that minister, he may have taken this step merely out of gratitude; I am sorry I have removed a man who owed his place to you; but if I have destroyed your handy-work, I can repair it. I will even do more for you than the Duke of Lerma: your friend, Don Alphonso, was only governour of the city of Valencia, I will make him viceroy of Arragon: I give you leave to let him know as much, and you may send him word to come and take the usual oaths.

On hearing these words, I made a sudden transition from extreme grief to excessive joy; which disordered my senses to that degree, that it was visible in my manner of thanking his Excellency; but the confusion I was in did not displease him; and, as I informed him that Don Alphonso was at Madrid, he told me I might present him that very day. I hastened therefore immediately to the image of St. Gabriel, where I overjoyed Don Cæsar's son by acquainting him with his new preferment.

ment. However, he could scarcely believe what I told him; so difficult was it for him to persuade himself, that the prime minister, whatever value he had for me, could be capable of giving viceroyalties on my account. I carried him to the Count-Duke, who received him very civilly, and told him, he had behaved himself so well in the government of the city of Valencia, that the King judging him proper to fill a greater place, had conferred upon him the viceroyalty of Arragon. "Besides," added he, "this dignity is not above your birth, and the nobility of Arragon cannot murmur at the court's choice."

His Excellency made no mention of me, and the public were ignorant of the share I had in this affair; which saved Don Alphonso and the minister from some scurvy jests that the world might have passed upon a viceroy of my making.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son was sure of his point, he dispatched an express to Valencia, to acquaint his father and Seraphina therewith, who soon set out for Madrid. Their first care, after their arrival, was to visit me, and load me with acknowledgments. What a pleasing and glorious sight was this to me, to see the three persons who were the dearest to me in the world, striving who should embrace me most. As sensibly moved with my zeal and affection, as with the honour the post of viceroy was going to confer upon their family, they could never have been weary of expressing their gratitude. They even spoke to me as if they were talking to a person of

an equal rank with themselves ; they seemed to have forgot they had been my masters, and thought they could never testify friendship enough for me. To pass over unnecessary circumstances, Don Alphonso, after having received his patent, thanked the King, and his minister, and taking the usual oaths, set out from Madrid with his family, in order to take up his residence at Saragossa. He made his entry into that city with all imaginable magnificence ; and the Arragonians shewed by their acclamations, that I had given them a viceroy who was very acceptable to them.

C H A P. XIII.

Gil Blas meets Don Gaston de Cogollos, and Don Andrea de Tordefillas, in the King's apartment ; whither they all went ; the conclusion of the story of Don Gaston and Donna Helena de Galisteo ; what service Santillane did Tordefillas.

I Was perfectly in raptures, on having so fortunately changed a discarded governour into a viceroy ; even the Lords of Leyva themselves were less overjoyed thereat, than me : another occasion soon offered for me to employ my credit in behalf of a friend ; which I think I ought to relate, to convince my readers I was no longer the same Gil Blas who sold all the court-favours under the former administration.

Happening to be one day in the King's antechamber, where I was discoursing with some noblemen,

noblemen, who, knowing me to be a favourite of the prime minister's, did not disdain my conversation ; I perceived in the crowd, Don Gaston de Cogollos, the prisoner of state whom I had left in the tower of Segovia : he was with Don Andrea de Tordefillas, whom I had left governor of the said tower. I quitted my company very willingly to go and embrace those two old friends ; and if they were surpris'd at seeing me there, I was much more so at meeting them in a place so unexpected. After several hearty embraces on all sides, Don Gaston said : " Signior de Santillane, we have abundance of questions to ask each other, but we are not here in a place convenient for that purpose ; suffer me to carry you where Signior Tordefillas and I shall be glad to have a long conversation with you." I consented ; we broke through the crowd, and went out of the palace. We found Don Gaston's coach, which was waiting for him in the street, and getting all into it, drove to the great square, where the bull-fights are performed, and where Cogollos lived in a very handsome hotel.

" Signior Gil Blas," said Don Andrea, when we were in a parlour magnificently furnished, " I thought, that, at your departure from Segovia, you hated the court, and was resolved to abandon it for ever." " That indeed was my design," answered I, " and whilst the late King lived, I did not change my mind ; but when I knew the Prince his son was upon the throne, I was desirous of trying whether the new monarch would remember me. He

He did call me to remembrance, and I had the good luck to be favourably received by him; he even recommended me himself to his first minister, who has taken a liking to me, and with whom your humble servant is more in favour, than ever he was with the Duke of Lerma. This, Signior Don Andrea, is what I had to tell you; now be pleased to acquaint me whether you are still governour of the tower of Segovia." "No, indeed," answered he; "the Count-Duke has put another in my place; undoubtedly he imagined me entirely devoted to his predecessor." "And I," said Don Gaston, "have been set at liberty for a contrary reason; the first minister no sooner knew of my being confined in the prison of Segovia, by the Duke of Lerma's orders, but he released me. I must now inform you, Signior Gil Blas, what has befallen me since my enlargement.

"The first thing I did," pursued he, "after having thanked Don Andrea for his civilities to me during my imprisonment, was to repair to Madrid: I made my appearance before the Count-Duke, who said to me: "Do not apprehend that your misfortune will be in the least prejudicial to your reputation; you are fully justified: I am so much the more assured of your innocence, because the Marquis de Villareal, whose accomplice you was suspected to be, was not guilty himself; notwithstanding his being a Portuguese, and even a relation of the Duke of Braganza's, he is less in his interests than in those of the King my master. It ought not therefore to have been

been imputed to you as a crime, that you was devoted to that Marquis ; wherefore, to repair the injury that has been done you, in accusing you of treason, the King gives you a lieutenant's commission in his Spanish guards." I accepted the post ; only I begged the minister, before I entered upon duty, to suffer me to go to Coria, to see my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla : the minister granted me a month for that purpose, and I set out for that place with only one footman.

" We had already passed Colmenar, and were got into a hollow way between two hills, when we perceived a cavalier, who was defending himself valiantly, against three men who attacked him all together. I did not in the least hesitate what I should do, but made haste to join him, and placed myself by his side. I observed as we were fighting, that our adversaries were masked, and that we had to do with vigorous antagonists : nevertheless, in spite of their strength, and their address, we remained conquerors ; I ran one through, he fell from his horse ; and the other two fled away in an instant. It is true, the victory was no less fatal to us, than to the wretch I had killed ; for after the action, my companion and I both felt ourselves dangerously wounded. But imagine how great was my surprise, when I found this cavalier to be Combados, the husband of Donna Helena. He was no less astonished to see that I was his defender : " Ah ! Don Gaston," cried he, " what ! is it you that came to my assistance ? When you so generously took my part, you knew not I
was

was the man who had robbed you of your mistress." "I was ignorant of it indeed," answered I; "but had I been certain of it, do you think I should have hesitated upon doing as I did? Could you have so ill an opinion of me, to think me of so mean a spirit?" "No, no," replied he, "I judge more favourably of you; and if I die of my wounds, I hope yours will not prevent your being the better for my death." "Combados," said I, "although I have not yet forgot Donna Helena, know that I do not desire her possession at the expence of your life; I even applaud myself for having contributed to the saving you from the three assassins, because therein I have done an action that is agreeable to your spouse."

"Whilst we were talking in this manner, my footman dismounted, and going up to the cavalier who lay stretched out upon the dust, pulled off his mask, and discovered a face which Combados immediately knew. "It is Caprara," cried he, "that perfidious cousin, who, out of spite for having missed of a rich inheritance, which he had unjustly disputed with me, has long secretly nourished the design of assassinating me, and had at last pitched upon this day for putting it in execution; but Heaven has ordained that he should fall the victim of his own villany."

"In the meanwhile, our blood ran very freely, and we lost strength visibly; however, as much wounded as we were, we made a shift to reach the town of Villarejo, which was but two muskets shot from the field of battle.

As

As soon as we came to the first inn, we desired some surgeons ; and accordingly one came, who was said to be very skilful : he searched our wounds, which he found highly dangerous, and dressed them ; the next day, on taking off the dressings, he told us, the wounds of Don Blas were mortal ; as for mine, he judged more favourably of them, and the event shewed him to be no false prophet.

“ Combados, finding himself condemned to death, bent all his thoughts upon preparing himself for it : he sent likewise an express to his wife, to acquaint her both with what had passed, and the melancholy condition he was in. Donna Helena was soon at Villarejo : she came thither with her mind perplexed with an uneasiness, that proceeded from two different causes ; the danger to which her husband’s life lay exposed, and the fear of having a passion, that was but ill extinguished, kindled again afresh at the sight of me : this put her into a terrible agitation. “ Madam,” said Don Blas, as soon as she came into his presence, “ you are arrived just time enough to receive my last farewell ; I am at the point of death, and I look upon my fate as a punishment from Heaven, for having torn you from Don Gaston by an imposture : far from murmuring at it, I exhort you myself, to restore to him a heart of which I have robbed him.” Her tears were the only answer Donna Helena gave to this speech ; and indeed they were the best reply she could have made, not being as yet enough disengaged from me, to forget
the

the artifice he had used, to induce her to break her word with me.

“ It fell out as the surgeon had foretold, that, in less than three days, Combados died of his wounds ; whereas mine gave great hopes of a speedy cure : and the young widow, entirely taken up with the care of having her husband’s body removed to Coria, in order to pay him all the honours she owed to his memory, set out from Villarejo on her return thither, after having inquired, as it were out of mere good manners, of the state of my health. As soon as I was in a condition to follow her, I went likewise for Coria, where I recovered my strength completely ; upon which Donna Eleonora, my aunt, and Don George de Galisteo, Donna Helena’s father, resolved we should be married without delay for fear fate should again part us by some new misfortune. Our wedding then was clapt up without any noise, on account of Don Blas’ too recent death ; and in a few days after, returned to Madrid. As I had exceeded the time prescribed me by the Count-Duke for my journey, I was afraid that minister would have given my lieutenantancy to another ; but he had not disposed of it, and had even the goodness to accept of my excuses for my long stay.

“ I am now therefore,” pursued Cogollos “ lieutenant of the Spanish guards, and I am very well pleased with my post : I have got acquainted with a set of agreeable company, and pass my time with them to my satisfaction.” “ I wish I could say as much,” cried

Don Andrea, "but I am very far from being contented with my lot; I have lost my place, which, though not agreeable, was very beneficial, and have no friends who have sufficient credit to procure me another wherein I may be settled." "Pardon me, Signior Don Andrea," interrupted I smiling, "you have a friend in me, who may be of some use to you. I have already told you, that I am more in favour with the Count-Duke, than ever I was with the Duke of Lerma, and you have the boldness to tell me to my face, you know nobody who can procure you a good settlement. Have not I already done you a service of the same nature? Do not you remember my getting you named for a post a Mexico, where you must have made your fortune, if love had not detained you in the city of Alicant? I am much more able to serve you now, when I have the ear of the first minister." "I rely then wholly upon you," resumed Tordefillas; "but," added he, smiling in his turn, "pray do not send me to New Spain; I would not go thither, though it were even to be made president of the audience at Mexico."

We were interrupted in this part of our discourse, by the coming of Donna Helena into the room; whose agreeable person fully answered the idea I had formed to myself of her charms. "Madam," said Cogollos, presenting me to her, "this is the Signior de Santillane, of whom you have sometimes heard me talk, and whose diverting company has often given a truce to my sorrows during my confinement." "Yes, Madam," cried I to

VOL. IV. S Donna

Donna Helena, "he delighted in my conversation, because you was always the subject." Don George's daughter answered this compliment with great modesty. After which I took my leave of this new-married couple, protesting I was overjoyed that a happy wedding had at last succeeded to their long and constant passion. After thus applying myself to Tordefillas, I desired him to tell me where he lodged; which when he had informed me, "Without bidding you farewell, Don Andrea," said I, "it is to be hoped, that, before a week is expired, you will be convinced my power is equal to my good-will."

I was not deceived in my expectation. The very next morning the Count-Duke gave me an opportunity of obliging my friend Tordefillas. "Santillane," said his Excellency, "the place of governour of the royal prison at Valladolid is vacant; it brings in above three hundred pistoles a-year; and I have a great mind to make you a present of it." "I would not have it, my Lord," answered I, "though it were worth ten thousand ducats *per annum*; I renounce all posts that I cannot possess without quitting your service." "But you may very well enjoy that post," replied the minister, "without being obliged to leave Madrid, any otherwise than to go from time to time to Valladolid, to look into the state of the gaol." "You may say what you please," resumed I, "but I will have nothing to do with this employment, but on condition of resigning it in favour of a brave gentleman named *Don Andrea de Tordefillas*, formerly go-

vernour

vernour of the tower of Segovia: I should be very glad to make him this present, as an acknowledgment for his good usage of me in my confinement."

This discourse made the minister laugh. "By what I see, Gil Blas," said he, "you will make a governour of the prison-royal, as well as you did a viceroy. Well, be it so, my lad, I grant you the vacant place for Tordefillas; but tell me truly, what profit will you get by it? For I cannot think you fool enough to be willing to make use of your credit for nothing. "My Lord," answered I, "must not a man pay his debts? Don Andrea, without any interest, shewed me all the kindness in his power; ought not I to do the same by him?" "You are grown very disinterested, Signior de Santillane," replied his Excellency; "you was quite the reverse, as I remember, under the last administration." "I confess it," said I; "bad examples corrupted my morals: as every thing was sold then, I conformed myself to the fashion; and as every thing is given now *gratis*, I have resumed my integrity."

I obtained then the government of the prison-royal of Valladolid, for Don Andrea de Tordefillas, and sent him away soon to that city, as well satisfied with his new settlement, as I was with having discharged myself of the obligations I had to him.

CHAP. XIV.

Santillane goes to see the poet Nunez; what persons he found there, and what conversation passed between them.

ONE afternoon the fancy took me to go and visit the poet of the Asturias, having a great curiosity to see what sort of lodgings he had got: I went then to the hotel of Signior Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, and inquired for Nunez. "He does not live here now," said a footman who was at the door; "he lodges there at present," added he, pointing to a neighbouring house; "he has an apartment there backwards." I went thither then, and after having crossed a little court, entered into a room with bare walls, where I found my friend Fabricio still at table, with five or six of his companions, whom he was treating that day.

Dinner was just over, and consequently they were in a fit humour for disputing; but as soon as they perceived me, a profound silence succeeded to their noisy controversies. Nunez rose up with great eagerness to receive me, crying, "Gentlemen, this is the Signior de Santillane, who is willing to honour me with a visit; pay your homage with me to the favourite of the prime minister." At these words, all the guests got up also to salute me; and in consideration of the title he had given me, were superlatively respectful in their civilities. Although I had no need either of eating or drinking, I could not avoid sitting down

down at table with them, and even pledging them in a bumper which they drank to my health.

As I imagined my presence restrained them from going on freely with their discourse; "Gentlemen," said I, "methinks, I have broke in upon your conversation; resume it again, I beg you, or I will be gone." "These gentlemen, then," said Fabricio, "were talking of the Iphigenia of Euripides; the bachelor Melchior de Villegas, who is a first-rate scholar, asked Don Jacinto de Romarate what affected him most in this tragedy?" "Yes," cried Don Jacinto, "and I answered, it was the danger to which Iphigenia was exposed." "And I replied," said the bachelor, "(which I am ready to make out,) that it is not her danger which is really the most affecting circumstance in that piece." "What is it then?" cried the old licentiate Gabriel de Leon. "It is the wind," said the bachelor.

The whole company burst into a loud fit of laughter at this answer, which I did not think was meant seriously; I imagined that Melchior had only said so to enliven the conversation. I did not know this scholar; he was a man that was by no means in jest. "Laugh on, as much as you please, Gentlemen," resumed he coldly; "I will maintain that it is the wind alone that ought to affect, move, and strike the spectators. Imagine to yourselves," pursued he, "a numerous army assembled together to go and besiege Troy; imagine the infinite impatience of the commanders and soldiers to execute this enterprize, that they

may return quickly to Greece, where they have left all that is most dear to them, their household gods, their wives, and children; nevertheless, a cursed contrary wind detains them in Aulis, and seems to nail them to the harbour; and if it do not change, they cannot go to lay siege to the city of Priam. It is the wind therefore that is the most affecting circumstance in this tragedy. I am on the Greeks side; I espouse their interest; I wish only for the departure of their fleet; and see with an indifferent eye, Iphigenia exposed to danger, because her death is the means to obtain a favourable wind of the gods."

As soon as Villegas had done speaking, the laughter began again at his expence. Nunez, however, had the malice to back his opinion, on purpose to give more scope to the laughers, who began to vie with each other in breaking scurvy jests upon the wind. But the bachelor, looking upon them all with a phlegmatic and haughty air, called them ignorant and vulgar wretches. I expected every moment to see them fall together by the ears, the usual end of their disputations: however, I was deceived for once in my expectations; they contented themselves with mutually calling each other names, and went away after having eaten and drank at discretion.

When they were all gone, I asked Fabricio why he did not still live with the treasurer, and whether they were at variance. "At variance!" answered he, "Heavens preserve me from it; I am better than ever with Signior Don Bertrand, who has given me leave

to live separately from him. Wherefore I hired this apartment to receive my friends in, and make merry with them at liberty, which happens very often ; for you know very well I am not of the humour to leave great riches to my heirs ; and what is very happy for me, I have it now in my power to make parties of pleasure every day." " I am overjoyed at it, my dear Nunez," replied I, " and cannot help congratulating you again upon the success of your last tragedy ; the eight hundred dramatic pieces of the great Lopez, did not bring him in one quarter of what the Count de Saldagne was worth to you."

B O O K XII.

C H A P. I.

Gil Blas is sent by the minister to Toledo ; the motive and success of his journey.

A Month was already almost elapsed since my Lord had said to me every day, " Santillane, the time approaches when I shall make use of your address," and yet this time never came. It did come, however, at last ; and his Excellency spoke to me in these terms ; " They say, that in the company of comedians belonging to Toledo, there is a young actress whose talents make a great noise ; they pretend she dances and sings divinely ; besides which, the audience are in perfect raptures at her incomparable acting : they add likewise that she is very beautiful. Such an admirable

admirable person deserves very well to appear at court: the King loves comedies, music, and dancing; he must not be deprived of the pleasure of seeing and hearing an actress of such uncommon merit. I have resolved therefore to send you to Toledo, that you may be judge whether she is so great a wonder; I will depend upon the impression she makes upon you; I rely upon your taste."

I answered his Excellency, that I would give him a good account of this affair; and prepared myself to set out with only one footman, whom I made lay aside the minister's livery, that I might do things the more mysteriously, which was very much to the Count-Duke's liking. I took the road then to Toledo, and when I arrived there, dismounted at an inn near the castle. I had scarce set foot on ground, when the landlord, taking me, without dispute, for some gentleman of that country, said to me, "Signior Cavalier, you are come to this city undoubtedly to see the august ceremony of the *Auto da Fe**, that is to be solemnised here to-morrow." I answered him, "Yes;" thinking it better to let him believe so, than to give him room to question me what brought me to Toledo. "You will see," resumed he, "one of the finest processions that ever was made; they say there are above a hundred prisoners, amongst which they reckon above ten that are to be burnt."

In effect, the next morning, before sunrise, I heard all the bells in the city toll; they made this jangling to apprise the people they

* Act. of Faith.

were going to begin the *Auto da Fe*. Being curious to see this solemnity, I dressed myself in haste, and went to the inquisition. All about there, and along all the streets through which the procession was to pass, there were scaffolds built up, upon one of which I got a seat for my money. In a little time, I perceived the Dominican friars, who walked first, with the banner of the inquisition carried before them. Those good fathers were immediately followed by those melancholy victims, whom the holy office resolved that day to sacrifice. These miserable wretches went one after another, with their heads and feet bare, holding each of them a wax taper in his hand, and having his * godfather by his side. Some had a scapulary of yellow cloth, full of St. Andrew's crosses painted red, and called *Sambenito*; others wore carochas, which are pasteboard caps in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and covered with flames and diabolical figures.

As I looked with the greatest attention upon those unfortunate creatures, with a compassion that I took great care not to let be seen, for fear it should be imputed to me as a crime; I fancied I saw amongst those whose heads were covered with carochas, the Reverend father Hilary, and his companion friar Ambrose. They passed afterwards so close by me, that it being impossible to be mistaken; "What do I see?" said I to myself.

* They call godfathers all the persons named by the Inquisitor to accompany the prisoners in the *Auto da Fe*, and they are answerable for them if they escape.

"Has

“Has Heaven then, wearied out with the impious lives of those two reprobates, delivered them over to the justice of the inquisition?” Having thus said, I felt myself seized with horror; I was took with a trembling all over me; and my spirits were disordered to such a degree, that I thought I should have swooned. The correspondence I had had with these villains, the adventure of Xelva, in short all that we had done together, struck my memory that moment; and I thought I could never sufficiently thank Heaven, for having preserved me from the scapulary, and the carochas.

When the ceremony was over, I returned to my inn, trembling all over at the horrible spectacle I had just seen; but the dreadful images with which my mind was filled went off insensibly, and I only thought how to discharge well the commission my master had given me. I waited then with impatience till the time the play was to begin, that I might go thither, judging that was the first thing to be done; and as soon as the hour was come, I went to the playhouse, where I sat next to a knight of Alcantara. I soon entered into discourse with him: “Signior,” said I, “may a stranger beg leave to ask you one question?” “Signior Cavalier,” answered he very civilly, “I shall take it as an honour.” “I have heard the comedians of Toledo highly extolled,” said I; “were not they in the wrong who commended them so much to me?” “No,” replied the knight, “their company is not bad, there are even some very

very excellent players amongst them. You will see, amongst others, the beauteous Lucretia, an actress of but fourteen years old that will amaze you. There will be no need of my pointing her out to you; when she appears upon the stage, you will easily distinguish her." I asked the knight, if she would play that evening? he answered, "Yes," and that she had a very shining part in the comedy that was to be then acted.

Well, the play began, and two actresses appeared upon the stage, who had neglected nothing that could contribute to the rendering them lovely, but I took neither of them for the person whom I wanted. At last Lucretia came forward from behind the scenes, and her appearance upon the stage was proclaimed by a long and general clapping of the hands. "Ah! here she is," said I to myself: "what a noble air! what graces! what sparkling eyes! the tempting creature!" In effect, I was very well satisfied with her, or rather, her presence made a sensible impression upon me. The very first words she spoke, were not only easy and unaffected, but were delivered with a life, and fire, and judgment, above her age; insomuch that I willingly joined my applauses to those she had received from the whole audience, during the acting of the play. "Well," said the knight, "you see how Lucretia is received by the public." "I am not at all surpris'd at it," answered I. "You would be yet less so," replied he, "if you had heard her sing; she is a perfect Siren; wo be to them who
hearken

hearken to her without stopping their ears. Neither is her dancing less formidable," pursued he; "her feet, as dangerous as her voice, charm the eye, and force all hearts to surrender." "At this rate," cried I, "it must be confessed she is a prodigy: what happy mortal has the pleasure of ruining himself for so amiable a creature?" "She has no declared lover," said he, "and malice itself does not charge her with any secret intrigue: nevertheless," added he, "she may have one; for she is under the direction of her aunt Estella, who, without dispute, is the most artful of all the comedians."

At the name of Estella, I interrupted the knight with precipitation, to ask him: "if this Estella was an actress of the Toledo company." "She is one of the best," said he; "she has not played to-night, and we are no gainers by that; she generally acts the chamber-maid, and it is a part she plays perfectly well. What life and spirit she shews in her acting! perhaps she even overdoes it; but it is a fault of the right side that ought to be forgiven." The knight then told me wonders of this Estella; and by the description he gave me of her person, I did not in the least doubt, but it was Laura, the same Laura of whom so much mention has been made in my history, and whom I left at Grenada.

That I might be fully satisfied as to this point, I went behind the scenes when the play was over, and asked for Estella; and seeking her every where with my eyes, I found her in one of the dressing rooms, where she

she was discoursing with some gentlemen, who perhaps only regarded her as she was aunt to Lucretia. I went up to salute Laura; but whether it was through caprice, or to punish me for my precipitated departure from Grenada, she made as if she did not know me, and received my civilities with so cold an air, that I was a little confounded. Instead of reproaching her in jest for this cool reception, I was fool enough to be provoked at it. I even went away abruptly, and resolved in my anger to return to Madrid the very next day. "In order to be revenged of Laura," said I, "her niece shall not have the honour of appearing before the King; to this end, I need only give the minister what character I please of Lucretia; I need only say she dances with an ill grace, that her voice is shrill, and that all her charms are owing to her youth; and I am sure his Excellency will have no desire to bring her to court."

Such was the vengeance I resolved to take of Laura, for her rude behaviour to me; but my resentment was of no long continuance. Next day, as I was preparing to set out, a little footboy entered my room, and said, "Here is a note I am to deliver to the Signior de Santillane." "That is me, child," said I, taking the letter, which I opened, and found these words: "Forget the manner in which you was received last night behind the scenes, and suffer yourself to be conducted where the bearer will bring you." Immediately I followed the little footboy, who,

VOL. IV. T when

when we were near the theatre, introduced me to a very handsome house, where I found Laura at her toilet, in a very genteel apartment.

She rose up to embrace me, and said, "Signior Gil Blas, I know very well you have no reason to be pleased with the reception you met with last night, when you came to salute me behind the scenes; an old friend like you had a right to expect a better welcome: but I must tell you, to excuse myself, that I was in the worst humour in the world just when you came up to me. My head was full of some malicious speeches, that one of our gentlemen had been pleased to make about my niece, whose reputation is dearer to me than my own. Your abrupt going away," pursued she, "made me sensible of my distraction; and that very moment I charged my footboy to follow you to know your lodging, with design to atone for my fault to-day." "It is entirely atoned for, my dear Laura," said I, "let us speak no more of it: let us rather inform each other mutually, what has befallen us, since the unfortunate day when the fear of a just chastisement made me leave Grenada with some precipitation. I left you, if you remember it, in a pretty great perplexity; how did you extricate yourself from it? had not you need of all your address to appease your Portuguese lover?" "Not in the least," answered Laura; "do not you know, that, in such cases, men are so weak, that they sometimes even save the women the trouble of justifying themselves?"

"I still

“ I still insisted upon it,” continued she, “to the Marquis de Marialva, that you was my brother. Forgive me, Signior de Santillane, if I treat you as familiarly as formerly ; but I cannot leave off my old customs. I will tell you then, that I came off by the dint of impudence. Do not you see,” said I to the Portuguese nobleman, “ that this is all the effect of rage and jealousy ? Narcissa, my companion, and my rival, exasperated to see me in quiet possession of a heart she has missed, has played me this trick ; she has bribed the undersnuffer of the candles ; and he, to serve her resentment, has the impudence to say, that he knew me at Madrid chambermaid to Arsenia : nothing can be more false ; Don Antonio Cœlo’s widow has always had more elevated sentiments, than to stoop to serve an actress. Besides, what proves the falsity of this accusation, is, my brother’s precipitated retreat ; were he present, he could confute this calumny ; but Narcissa, no doubt, has had recourse to some new artifice to make him vanish.

“ Although these reasons,” pursued Laura, “ were not the best in the world to make my apology, the Marquis had the goodness to be satisfied therewith ; and that good-natured nobleman continued to love me till the day he left Grenada, to return to Portugal. Indeed his departure followed very soon after yours, and Zapata’s wife had the pleasure to see me lose the lover, of whom I had deprived her. After this, I lived still some years longer at Grenada, when our company falling together

by the ears, (which happens sometimes amongst us), some went to Seville, others to Cordova, and I came to Toledo; where I have been these ten years with my niece Lucretia, whom you must have seen last night, since you was at the play."

I could not forbear laughing at these words, and Laura asked me the reason. "Cannot you easily guess?" said I. "You have neither brother nor sister, and consequently you cannot be aunt to Lucretia; besides which, when I reckon up within myself, the time that is passed since our last separation, and compare it with the age of your niece, methinks you two might yet be a little nearer akin."

"I understand you, Signior Gil Blas," answered Don Antonio's widow, with a little blush; "how exact you are in your calculations! there is no possibility of imposing upon you. Well, since it must out, I own it, friend, Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis de Marialva; she is the fruits of our union; I cannot conceal it from you any longer." "How mightily you put yourself to it, my queen," said I, "in revealing to me this secret, after having made me the confidant of your pranks with the steward of the hospital of Zamora? Besides, let me tell you, Lucretia is a person of such uncommon merit, that the public can never thank you sufficiently for having made them such a present: it were to be wished your companions never made them worse."

If any malicious reader, calling to mind
here

here the private conversations I had with Laura at Grenada, when I was secretary to the Marquis de Marialva, should suspect me of having a right to dispute with that nobleman the honour of being Lucretia's father, it is a suspicion, which, to my shame, I must own to be very unjust.

I gave Laura an account, in my turn, of my principal adventures, and the present state of my affairs; to which she hearkened with an attention that shewed me it was not indifferent to her. "Friend Santillane," said she, when I had ended, "by what I can perceive, you act a pretty considerable part upon the theatre of the world; you cannot imagine how much I am overjoyed at it. When I carry Lucretia to Madrid, to enter her in the King's company, I flatter myself she will find a powerful protector in the Signior de Santillane." "Doubt it not in the least," answered I, "you may depend upon me: I will get your daughter received into the King's company whenever you please; I dare venture to promise you that, without presuming too much upon my own power." "I would take you at your word," replied Laura, "and set out to-morrow for Madrid, if I was not confined here by my engagements with our company." "An order from court will set aside your engagements," said I; "and I will take upon myself to procure you one; you shall have it in less than eight days. It will please me very much to rob the Toledans of Lucretia; so beautiful and fine an actress is made for court; we have a right and title to her."

Just as I had thus said, Lucretia entered the room with such an air and grace, that I could have fancied I had seen the goddess Hebe: she had just got out of bed, and her natural beauty, displaying all its charms, without the help of art, dazzled the eye with an enchanting object. "Come hither, niece," said her pretended aunt, "come and thank this gentleman for his good-will to us; he is one of my old friends, who has great credit at court, and will undertake to get us both into the King's company." This discourse seemed to give the little maiden some pleasure; inso-much that she made me a low courtesy, and said with a bewitching smile, "I return you, Sir, my humblest thanks for your obliging intentions; but, in taking me away from an audience that fancies me, are you sure I shall not be disliked by the people at Madrid? I shall be a loser perhaps by the exchange. I remember to have heard my aunt say, she has seen actors highly applauded in one place, and hissed in another; that frightens me: take care how you expose me to the contempt of the court, and yourself to their reproaches." "Charming Lucretia," answered I, "that is what neither of us need apprehend: I rather fear your inflaming every heart, and causing variance amongst our grandees." "My niece's apprehensions," said Laura, "are better grounded than yours; however, I hope they will be both without foundation: if Lucretia's charms are not sufficient to make a noise in the world, to atone for that she

is not actress bad enough to deserve to be despised."

We continued our conversation for yet some time longer; and I had reason to judge by every word Lucretia spoke, that she was a girl of a superior understanding: I took leave afterwards of these two heroines of the stage, assuring them they should, without delay, have an order from court to come to Madrid.

C H A P. II.

Santillane gives an account of his commission to the minister, who charges him to send for Lucretia to Madrid: the arrival of that actress; and her first appearance upon the King's theatre.

AT my return to Madrid, I found the Count-Duke very impatient to know the success of my journey. "Gil Blas," said he, "have you seen the actress in question? has she merit enough to be worth sending for to court?" "My Lord," answered I, "fame, which generally extols handsome people more than they deserve, does not even do justice to the young Lucretia; she is a prodigy, both for her beauty, and for her other accomplishments."

"Is it possible," cried the minister, with an inward satisfaction which I read in his eyes, and which made me think it was on his own account he had sent me to Toledo; "is it possible she should be as lovely as you represent her?" "When you see her," replied I, "you will confess there is no saying any thing in her praise, but what will fall short of what
her

her charms really deserve." "Santillane," resumed his Excellency, "give me a faithful account of your journey, I shall be glad to hear it. To satisfy my master then, I related to him all that had passed, to which I added the history of Laura. I informed him, that this actress had had Lucretia by the Marquis de Marialva, a noble Portuguese, who happening to stop at Grenada in his travels, fell in love with her. In short, when I had recited to his Excellency all the passages between these players and me, he said, "I am glad Lucretia is daughter to a man of quality; that will make me concern myself the more for her; we must have her here. But go on," pursued he, "as you have begun; do not let me appear therein; let all be placed to the account of Gil Blas de Santillane."

I went then to Carnero, and told him his Excellency would have an order made out, whereby the King received into his company, Estella and Lucretia, actresses of the playhouse at Toledo. "Yes, Signior de Santillane," said Carnero, with a malicious smile, "it shall be done without delay; since, according to all appearance, you concern yourself for those two ladies." At the same time, he made out the order himself, and delivered it to me; and I sent it away immediately to Estella, by the same servant that had attended me to Toledo. About a week afterwards the mother and daughter arrived at Madrid, and took ready-furnished lodgings within two steps of the King's theatre; after which their first care was

to

to let me know it by a line from them. I went that moment to their lodgings; where, after a thousand offers of service on my part, and as many thanks on theirs, I left them to prepare for making their first appearance, which I wished might be both successful and shining.

They gave themselves out in the bills for two new actresses, whom the King's company had just received amongst them by an order from the court; and they began with a comedy they had used to play at Toledo with applause.

Is there any place in the world where they are not fond of novelty in their diversions? There was that day an extraordinary concourse at the playhouse, and it may easily be believed I did not fail being there: I was even in some pain for them before the play began; as much prepossessed as I was in favour of the mother and daughter, I trembled for them, so much was I in their interest. But they had scarce opened their mouths, before they dispelled all my fears, by the applauses they received. Estrella was looked upon as a consummate actress for the comical parts; and Lucretia as a prodigy when in the character of a lover. The latter, especially, won every heart, some admiring the lustre of her eyes, whilst others were moved with the sweetness of her voice; and all in general being struck with the graces and dazzling brightness of her blooming youth, went away in raptures at her presence.

The Count-Duke, who interested himself
more

more than I imagined in the performance of this actress, was that night at the theatre. I saw him go out towards the end of the piece, very well pleased, as I fancied, with our two comedians. Curious to know whether he was actually so much charmed with them, I hastened home after him, and following him into his closet, where he had just entered before me; "Well, my Lord," said I, "is your Excellency satisfied with the little Marialva?" "My Excellency," answered he, smiling, "would be very difficult, if I refused to join my approbation to that of the public: yes, my boy, I am charmed with your Lucretia, and do not in the least doubt but his Majesty will be highly pleased with seeing her."

C H A P. III.

Lucretia makes a great noise at court, and plays before the King, who falls in love with her: the consequence of that love.

THE appearance of these two new actresses soon made abundance of noise at court; the very next morning they were spoken of at the King's levee: some noblemen extolled especially the young Lucretia, and described her so lovely, that the monarch was struck with it; but dissimbling the impression their discourse had made upon him, he kept silence, and seemed not to give any attention to it.

Nevertheless, as soon as he was left alone with the Count Duke, he asked him who that actress was, whom they commended so highly. The minister answered, she was a young player

player of Toledo, who had made her first appearance the night before with great success. "This actress," continued he, "is called *Lucretia*, (a name very suitable to persons of her profession;) she is of Santillane's acquaintance, and he gave me such an advantageous character of her, that I thought proper to receive her into your Majesty's company." The King smiled on hearing my name, perhaps because he then remembered it was by my means he became acquainted with Catalina, and he had a thought that I might chance to do him the same service on this occasion. "Count," said he to the minister, "I will see this *Lucretia* play to-morrow night, and I charge you to send her notice of it."

The Count-Duke having given me an account of this conversation, and informed me of the King's intentions, dispatched me to the two actresses, to apprise them thereof. "I am come," said I to Laura, whom I met first, "to tell you great news: you will have to-morrow, amongst your spectators, the sovereign of the kingdom; this is what the minister has ordered to acquaint you with: I do not doubt but both your daughter and you will use your utmost efforts to deserve the honour this monarch will do you; but I advise you to chuse a play, wherein there is both singing and dancing, that *Lucretia* may have an opportunity of displaying at once all her talents, and strike him with admiration." "We will follow your counsel," answered Laura, "and it shall not be our faults, if his Majesty is not satisfied." "He cannot be otherwise," replied

replied I, seeing Lucretia enter the room in a dishabille, which became her more than the richest of her stage-dresses; "he will be so much the better pleased with your lovely niece, as he loves singing and dancing above all things; he may even be tempted to throw her his handkerchief." "I do not at all wish him to have that temptation," said Laura; "as powerful a monarch as he is, he might chance to meet with some obstacles to the accomplishment of his desires. Lucretia, though bred up behind the scenes, is a girl of virtue; and whatever pleasure she takes in seeing herself applauded upon the stage, she had yet rather pass for a modest woman than for a good actress."

"Aunt," said the little Marialva, joining then in the conversation, "why should we create monsters in our imaginations to combat them afterwards? I shall never have the trouble to resist the King's addresses; the delicacy of his taste will save him from the reproaches he would deserve, should he debase himself so low as to look on me." "But, lovely Lucretia," said I, "if it should so fall out, that his Majesty should devote himself to you, and chuse you for his mistress, would you be so cruel, to suffer him to languish in your chains, like an ordinary lover?" "Why not?" answered she. "Yes, no doubt; and setting virtue aside, methinks my vanity would be more flattered by having resisted his passion, than if I should have yielded to it." I was not a little astonished to hear a pupil of Laura's talk after that rate; and I left them both

both, commending the latter for having given the other so good an education.

Next day, the King, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the playhouse: they acted a piece set off with entertainments of singing and dancing, wherein our young actresses shined wonderfully. I kept my eyes fixed upon his Majesty from the beginning to the end, and applied myself to discover by his looks what he thought of her; but he put my penetration to a stand, by an air of gravity which he affected to assume during the whole play. I could not tell till next day what I was in pain to know. "Santillane," said the minister to me, "I am just come from the King, who has talked to me of Lucretia with so much fire, that I do not in the least doubt but he is smitten with this young actress; and as I told him it was you that had her brought from Toledo, he has expressed a desire of discoursing you upon that head in private: go directly to his chamber, where orders are already given for your admittance; run, and make haste back again to give me an account of your conversation."

I flew immediately to the King, whom I found alone; he was walking very fast till I came, and seemed to have his head full of thought. He asked me abundance of questions about Lucretia, and obliged me to tell him her whole story: after this he demanded of me if that little Siren had not already had some intrigue? I assured him to the contrary, notwithstanding the rashness of such kind of assurances, which seemed to give his Majesty

abundance of pleasure. "If it be so," resumed he, "I chuse you for my agent to Lucretia; I will have her informed of her conquest by your assistance: go, and acquaint her with it from me," pursued he, putting in my hands a box full of jewels, to the value of fifty thousand crowns, "and tell her I beg her to accept this present, till I give her some more solid marks of my passion."

Before I performed this commission, I went and rejoined the Count-Duke, to whom I gave a faithful account of all the King had said to me. I imagined that minister would be more afflicted than rejoiced at it: for I thought, as has been already observed, he had himself had a design upon Lucretia, and would be chagrined on hearing his master was become his rival; but I was greatly deceived. Far from seeming mortified at it, he was so infinitely overjoyed, that, not being able to contain himself, he let some words escape him, which did not fall to the ground. "Oh! by St. FRANCIS," said he, "PHILIP, I have you now safe; it is now you will begin to be afraid of business." This apostrophe discovered to me all the Count-Duke's artful management. I saw thereby that this nobleman fearing his Majesty would apply himself to state-affairs, endeavoured to amuse him by such pleasures as were most agreeable to his humour. "Santillane," said he afterwards, "lose no time; make haste, my boy, to execute the important order you have received, which many noblemen at court would be proud of being employed in. Remember," pursued he, "you have

have not here the Count de Lemos, who deprives you of the best part of the honour of the service done; you shall have it wholly yourself, and, what is more, all the profit."

Thus did his Excellency gild the pill, which I swallowed very patiently, but not without being sensible of its bitterness; for since my imprisonment, I had used myself to look upon things in a moral light, and did not think the employment of a Mercury in chief so honourable as he represented it to me. Nevertheless, though I was not vicious enough to discharge it without remorse, I had not virtue enough to refuse to perform it. I obeyed the King then so much the more willingly, because I saw, at the same time, that my complying with his Majesty's orders would be agreeable to the minister, whom I made it my whole study to oblige.

I judged it to be most proper to address myself at first to Laura, and to discourse her in private: I acquainted her with my orders in modest terms, and at the end of my speech pulled out the box of jewels. At the sight of so considerable a present, the gentlewoman not being able to conceal her joy, gave it free scope. "Signior Gil Blas," cried she, "it is not before the best and oldest of my friends, that I ought to lay any constraint upon myself: I should be in the wrong to put on a false severity of morals, and play the hypocrite with you. Yes, doubt it not," continued she, "I am overjoyed my daughter has made so valuable a conquest; I am sensible of all the advantages thereof; but, *entre nous*, I am afraid

Lucretia will look upon this affair in another light than me : although bred to the stage, she has so great a regard for virtue, that she has already rejected the vows of two young noblemen, both rich and agreeable. You will say," pursued she, " that these two young Lords were not kings ; I agree with you, and in all probability the love of a crowned head will shake Lucretia's virtue : nevertheless, I cannot forbear telling you, that the thing is uncertain ; and I declare to you I will not force my daughter : wherefore, if, far from thinking herself honoured by the King's transitory passion, she should look upon that honour as a disgrace, let not that great prince take it ill of her if she flies from it. Come again tomorrow," continued she, " and I will tell you whether you must return him a favourable answer, or his jewels."

I did not in the least doubt, but Laura would rather persuade Lucretia to swerve from her duty, than to persevere therein, and I depended very much upon the success of her persuasions : nevertheless, I heard with surprise next day, that Laura had been as hard put to it to bring her daughter to do amiss, as other mothers have to incite theirs to be virtuous : and what is yet more astonishing, is, that Lucretia, after having had some private interviews with the King, was so much afflicted at having abandoned herself to his desires, that she left the world on a sudden, and shut herself up in the monastery of the Incarnation ; where soon after she fell sick, and died with vexation. On the other hand, Laura being

being quite inconsolable for the loss of her daughter, and yet more for having been accessory to her death, retired into the convent of Repenting Maidens, to do penance for the pleasures of her youthful days. The King was sensibly concerned at Lucretia's sudden retirement; but that young prince, not being of a humour to grieve long at any thing, soon forgot her by little and little. As for the Count-Duke, though he did not seem touched at this accident, he was nevertheless greatly mortified at it, as the reader will easily believe.

C H A P. IV.

Of the new employment the minister gave Santillane.

I Myself was also sensibly afflicted at Lucretia's misfortune; and felt so much remorse for my having contributed to it, that looking on myself as an infamous wretch, notwithstanding the quality of the lover, whose passion I had assisted, I resolved for ever to abandon the post of Mercury in chief to our Spanish Jupiter. I even told the minister, I could no longer discharge that employment without reluctance; and begged him to make use of my talents any other way whatsoever. "Santillane," said he, "thy scruples charm me; and since thou art a lad of so much honour, I will find thee an employment more suitable to thy inclinations; it is this: listen attentively to the secret with which I am going to intrust thee.

“ Some years before I was in favour, chance offered one day to my view, a lady, who seemed to me so handsome and well shaped, that I had her followed. I heard she was a Genoese, named *Donna Margarita Spinola*, who lived at Madrid, upon the revenue brought her in by her beauty. I was told likewise that Don Francisco de Valeasar, a man in years, and married, but very rich, lavished away considerable sums upon this coquet. This account, which ought to have inspired me with a contempt of her, excited in me, on the contrary, a violent desire of sharing in her favours with Valeasar. Being possessed with this fancy, I had recourse, in order to satisfy it, to one of love’s emissaries, who had the address, in a small time, to procure me a private interview with the Genoese. This interview was followed by several others, insomuch that my rival and I were both equally well treated for our presents; and perhaps, there was likewise some other gallant who was as happy as either of us.

“ However that be, Margarita, by receiving such a jumble of offerings upon love’s altar, became insensibly a mother; and brought into the world a son, the honour of which she would have given to each of her lovers in particular: but none of them being able in conscience to boast of being father to this child, they would not acknowledge him; insomuch, that the Genoese was forced to bring him up, with the profits of her intrigues; which she did for eighteen years, at the end of which she died, leaving her son without a
groat,

groat, and, which is worse, without education.

"This," continued my Lord, "is the secret I had to intrust with thee; and now I am going to acquaint thee with the great design I have formed: I will draw this unhappy youth out of obscurity, and making him take a leap from one extreme to the other, will raise him to honour, and acknowledge him for my son."

It was impossible for me to be silent on hearing such an extravagant proposal. "How, my Lord," cried I, "can your Excellency have taken such a strange resolution? Forgive me, for using that expression; my zeal forces me to it." "You will think it prudent," resumed he with precipitation, "when I have acquainted you with the reasons that have induced me to take it. I will not have my collateral relations for my heirs. You will tell me, I am not yet so old to despair of having children by the Countess d'Olivarez; but every one knows himself best. Let it suffice thee to know there are no secrets in chymistry, which I have not in vain tried to become once more a father: wherefore, since fortune, supplying the defects of nature, offers me a child, to whom, at the bottom, I may, perhaps, really be father, I will adopt him; it is a thing resolved on."

When I found the minister was bent upon this adoption, I ceased to oppose it; knowing him to be a man capable of committing any folly, rather than depart from a resolution he had once taken. "All that now remains,"
pursued

purfued he, “ is, to give fome education to *Don Henry-Philip de Guzman* ; for that is the name I intend he fhall go by in the world, till he is fit to enjoy the dignities that wait him. You are the man, my dear Santillane, whom I have pitched upon to have an eye upon his education ; I rely upon your good fenfe and zeal for my fervice, for the care of forming his houfhould, providing him all forts of mafters, and, in a word, for making him an accomplished cavalier.” I would have excufed myfelf from accepting this employment, by representing to the Count-Duke, that it did not at all fuit me to breed up young noble-men, having never followed that bufinefs, which required more underftanding and merit than I was mafter of : but he interrupted me, and ftopped my mouth, by telling me, that he was abfolutely refolved upon my being governour to this adopted fon, whom he defigned for the firft pofts in the kingdom. I prepared myfelf then to enter upon this place, in complaifance to his Excellency, who, in return for my complying with his defires, augmented my little eftate with a penfion of a thoufand crowns *per annum*, which he procured for me, or rather gave me, upon the commandery of Mambra.

CHAP. V.

The son of the Genoese is acknowledged by an authentic act, and named Don Henry-Philip de Guzman; Santillane forms this young nobleman's household, and provides him all sorts of masters.

IN effect, the Count-Duke did not long defer acknowledging Donna Margarita Spínola's son; and the act of acknowledgment was made with the consent and good pleasure of the King. *Don Henry-Philip de Guzman* (that was the name given to this son of many fathers) was declared therein sole heir to the county of Olivarez, and the duchy of San-Lucar. Besides this, the minister, that nobody might be ignorant thereof, notified this declaration to all the foreign ambassadors, and grandees of Spain; who were not a little amazed at it. The laughers of Madrid found therein sufficient matter to divert themselves for a long time; neither did the satirists let slip so fine an opportunity of giving free scope to the gall of their pens.

I asked the Count-Duke where the pupil was, whom he designed to intrust to my care. "He is in this city," answered he; "under the direction of an aunt, from whom I will take him that instant, when you have prepared a house for his reception;" which was soon done. I rented a hotel, which I took care to see magnificently furnished; I then hired pages, a porter, and footmen; and, by the help of Caporis, filled up the places of all
the

the officers. When I had got all my family together, I went and informed his Excellency thereof; who immediately sent for this doubtful and new branch of the family of the Guzmans. I found him a tall youth, of a pretty agreeable figure. "Don Henry," said my Lord to him, pointing at the same time to me with his finger, "this cavalier is the guide I have chosen to direct you in the knowledge of the world; I have an entire confidence in him, and give him an absolute authority over you. Yes, Santillane," pursued he, addressing himself to me, "I resign him up to your care, and doubt not but you will give me a good account of him." To this discourse, the minister added an exhortation to the young man to conform himself to my will; after which I took Don Henry with me to his hotel.

As soon as we were got thither, I made all his domestics pass in review before him, telling him at the same time, what employment each of them had in the house. He did not appear at all surpris'd at the change of his condition; but giving way readily to the respect and submissive deference they paid him, he seem'd always to have been, what he now became only by mere chance. He did not want wit, but was so grossly ignorant, that he hardly knew how to read and write. I provided him therefore a tutor to teach him the elements of the Latin tongue, and agreed with a master of geography, a master of history, and a fencing-master. It may easily be judg'd, that I took care not to forget a dancing-master: I was only perplexed which to chuse;
for

for there was then a great number of famous ones at Madrid, and I did not know to which I ought to give the preference.

Whilst I was in this uncertainty, I saw a man, richly dressed, enter the court-yard of our hotel, and was told, he wanted to speak with me: I went immediatly out to meet him, imagining he was at least a knight of St. Jago, or Alcantara, and asked, what I could do to serve him. "Signior de Santillane," said he, "after having made me several bows, which smelled strong of his profession, "as I have been informed it is your Honour who chuses Don Henry's masters, I am come to offer you my service. My name is *Martin Ligero*, and, thank heaven, I have some reputation: I do not use to go and beg scholars, that belong only to petty dancing-masters; I generally wait till I am sent for: but as I teach the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Don Lewis de Haro, and some other noblemen of the house of Guzman, to which I was in some measure born a servant, I thought it my duty to prevent you." "I see by this discourse," answered I, "that you are the man we want. What do you ask a-month?" "Four double pistoles," resumed he, "that is the current price, and I give but two lessons a-week." "Four doublons a-month!" cried I, "that is a vast price." "How! a vast price!" resumed he, with an air of surprise; "you would give a pistole a-month to a master of philosophy."

It was impossible to keep one's countenance at such a comical answer; wherefore I laughed

ed at it very heartily, and asked Signior Ligero, whether he really thought a man of his profession preferable to a master of philosophy? "Without dispute," said he, "we are of more use than those gentlemen. What are mankind before they pass through our hands? Bodies all of a piece; perfect unlicked bears: but our instructions polish them by little and little, and make them insensibly assume some form; in a word, we teach them to move with a grace; we give them proper attitudes, with an air of nobleness and gravity."

I submitted to the powerful reasons of the dancing-master, and agreed with him to teach Don Henry, at the rate of four double pistoles a-month, since that was the price settled by the great masters of that art.

C H A P. VI.

Scipio returns from New Spain; Gil Blas places him with Don Henry. The studies of that young nobleman: the honours that were shewn him; and to what lady the Count-Duke married him. How Gil Blas was made a gentleman against his will.

I Had not yet settled half Don Henry's household, when Scipio returned from Mexico. I asked him if he was satisfied with his voyage. "I ought so to be," answered he, "since besides three thousand ducats in ready money, I have brought to the value of twice as much in merchandise that sells well here." "I congratulate you thereupon, my boy," said I; "there is your fortune begun already;

already ; it shall be your own fault, if you do not complete it by returning to the Indies next year ; or if you prefer, to the trouble of going so far to gather riches, an agreeable post at Madrid, you need only speak, I have one ready to offer you." " Oh ! by St. Jago," cried Coscolina's son, " there is no room for hesitation ; I had much rather accept of a good employment near your Worship, than expose myself anew to the perils of a long voyage : explain yourself, Sir, what place do you design your humble servant ?"

To let him better into the nature of it, I related to him the story of the young nobleman, whom the Count Duke had just introduced into the family of the Guzmans. After having given him this curious account, and informed him that the minister had named me *governour* to Don Henry, I told him I would make him valet de chambre to this adopted son. Scipio, who desired no better, accepted willingly of this post, and behaved himself so well in it, that in less than three or four days he gained the love and confidence of his new master.

I had imagined, that the masters whom I had chosen to teach the son of the Genoese, would lose all their labour about him ; thinking him of an age that would not be very tractable ; nevertheless he exceeded my expectation. He comprehended, and retained easily, all they taught him ; so that his masters were very well satisfied with him. I went with some eagerness to acquaint the Count-Duke with this news, which he received with an

excessive joy. "Santillane," cried he with transport, "you overjoy me, in telling me that Don Henry has a good memory, and a quick wit; I discover my blood in him; and what fully convinces me, that he is my son, is, that I have the same affection for him, as if I had had him by Madam d'Olivarez: you see thereby, my boy, that nature declares herself." I took care not to tell my Lord my thoughts upon that head, but, respecting his weakness, suffered him to enjoy the pleasure, whether true or false, of believing himself father to Don Henry.

Although all the Guzmans mortally hated this young nobleman, of a fresh date, they dissembled it out of policy; some of them even affected to court his friendship: the ambassadors likewise and grandees who were at Madrid, visited him, and shewed him all the honours they could have done, had he been the Count-Duke's lawful son. That minister, overjoyed to see his idol respected, did not long defer setting him off with honours. He began by asking of the King the cross of Alcantara for Don Henry, with a commandery of ten thousand crowns a-year. In a little time after, he got him made gentleman of the chamber; which done, having taken a resolution to marry him, and resolving to give him a lady of the noblest family in Spain, he cast his eyes upon Donna Juanna de Velasco, daughter to the Duke of Castile; and he had authority enough to make her have him, in spite of the Duke and her relations.

Some days before the wedding, my Lord
having

having sent for me, put some papers into my hand, and told me: "Here, Gil Blas, here is a patent which I have made pass the seals for you, whereby you are ennobled." "My Lord," answered I, pretty much surpris'd at these words; "your Excellency knows that I am born of very mean parents; it would be profaning the rank of a gentleman, in my opinion, to receive me into it; and it is, of all the favours his Majesty can confer upon me, that which I least desire, or deserve." "Your birth," answered the minister, "is an obstacle easy to be removed; you have been employed in state-affairs, both under my administration, and the Duke of Lerma's; besides," added he with a smile, "have not you done the King himself some services that deserve a recompense? In a word, Santillane, you are not unworthy of the honour I was willing to do you; besides, the post you are in with my son, requires your being a gentleman; it was for that reason I had you ennobled by a patent." "I submit, my Lord," replied I, "since your Excellency insists upon it absolutely." This said, I went out with my patent, which I put in my pocket.

"I am a gentleman now then it seems," said I to myself, when I got into the street; "I am ennobled without being obliged to my parents for it; I may now, when I please, assume the title of Don Gil Blas; and if any of my acquaintance should think fit to laugh at me for it, I may shew them my patent: but let us peruse it," pursued I; "let us see a little how my plebeian rust is scoured off therein."

therein." I read my patent then; the substance of which was, That the King, in return for the zeal I had manifested more than once for his service, and the welfare of the state, had thought proper to ennoble me. I dare venture to say, to my praise, that this patent did not inspire me with any pride: having always before my eyes the meanness of my extraction, this honour humbled me, instead of making me vain; accordingly, I resolved to lock up my patent in a drawer, without boasting of my having it.

C H A P. VII.

Gil Blas again meets Fabricio by chance; the last conversation they had together; and the important intelligence Nunez gave Santillane.

THE poet of the Asturias, as must have been observed, did not give himself much trouble to court my friendship; and, as for my part, my business would not permit me to visit him. I had never seen him since the day of the dispute about the *Iphigenia* of Euripides, when chance made me meet him once more near the Sun-gate. He came out of a printing-house; wherefore, I accosted him by saying, "So, so, Signior Nunez, you are come, I see, from a printer's; this seems to threaten the public with some new offspring of your brain."

"That is indeed what they must expect," answered he; "I have actually now in the press a pamphlet, which will make some noise in the republic of letters." "I do not question

tion the merit of your production," replied I; "but I wonder you amuse yourself in writing pamphlets: methinks they are trifles which do not redound much to the honour of the author." "I know that very well," resumed Fabricio, "and am not ignorant, that none but those who read every thing, will amuse themselves in perusing pamphlets: nevertheless, this is one that has escaped my pen, and I shall freely own to you that it is the child of necessity. Hunger, you know, makes the wolf come out of the wood."

"How!" cried I, "is it the author of the *Count de Saldagne* who says this to me? Can a man, that has two thousand crowns a-year, talk thus?" "Softly, friend," cried Nunez, interrupting me; "I am no longer that fortunate poet who enjoyed a good pension punctually paid. The affairs of the treasurer Don Bertrand have gone to wreck all on a sudden; he has fingered and wasted the King's money; for which all his effects are seized, and my pension is gone to the devil." "That is very unfortunate," said I; "but have you no hopes of any thing from that quarter?" "Not the least in the world," answered he; "Signior Gomez del Ribero, as poor as the wit his humble servant, is quite undone, and will never (as they say) be able to hold up his head again."

"If that be the case," replied I, "my friend, I must procure you some post, which may comfort you for the loss of your pension." "I will excuse you from that trouble," said he; "were you to offer me an employment,

under the minister, of 3000 crowns a-year, I would refuse it : the business of a clerk does not suit with the genius of a nurseling of the muses ; I must have learned amusements. In short, what shall I say to you ? I was born to live and die a poet, and am resolved to fulfil my destiny.

As for the rest," continued he, " do not imagine that we are very miserable ; besides our living perfectly independent, we are boon companions without care : the world believes that we often dine with Democritus and the rest of the philosophers, but they are very much mistaken in that point : there is not one of my brethren, without excepting even the makers of almanacs, who have not a good house to which they are welcome : as for my own part, I have two, where I am always received with pleasure. I have two tables, where I am sure of living in clover : one at a rich farmer of the revenues, to whom I have dedicated a romance ; and the other at a wealthy citizen's, who has the frenzy to desire always to have wits at his table : it happens luckily, that he is not very difficult in his choice, and Madrid supplies him with as many as he pleases."

" I cease to pity you then," said I to the poet of the Asturias, " since you are contented with your condition : however that be, I assure you again, that you shall always have, in Gil Blas, a friend, who is proof even against your neglect of him : if you have need, therefore, of my purse, come boldly to me, and let not a mistaken shame deprive both you of
an

an infallible relief, and me of the pleasure of obliging you."

"By this generous offer," cried Nunez, "I know you to be still Santillane; and give you a thousand thanks for being so favourably disposed towards me: in return, I must give you some wholesome advice: whilst the Count-Duke is yet all-powerful, and you are in possession of his good graces, make haste to advance your fortune; for that minister, as I have been told, begins to totter." I asked Fabricio, if he had this from good hands. To which he answered: "I have it from an old knight of Calatrava, who has the peculiar talent of discovering the greatest secrets: he is a man that is listened to like an oracle, and this is what I heard him say no longer than yesterday." "The Count-Duke," cried he, "has a great number of enemies, who all join their interest to destroy him; he relies too much upon the ascendant he has gained over the King's mind: that prince (as it is whispered) begins to hearken to some complaints that have reached his ears." I thanked Nunez for his intelligence, but gave little heed to it, and returned home fully persuaded my master's authority was not to be shaken; looking upon him as one of those old oaks, that have taken firm root in a forest, and cannot be blown down by any storm.

C H A P. VIII.

How Gil Blas found that Fabricio's news was not false : the King's journey to Saragossa.

NEvertheless, what the poet of the Asturias had told me was not without foundation : there was at the palace a secret combination against the Count-Duke, of which the Queen was said to be the head ; and yet the public could not get the least notice of any measures taken by the cabal to remove the minister : nay, more than a year elapsed, without my perceiving that his favour was in the least upon the decline.

But the revolt of the Catalans, supported by France, and the ill success of the war against those rebels, excited the murmurs of the people, who complained highly of the government. These complaints occasioned the holding a council in the King's presence, at which his Majesty desired the Marquis de Grana, the imperial ambassador at the court of Spain, to assist. It was there debated, whether it was proper for the King to continue in Castile, or to go to Arragon, and shew himself to his troops.

The Count-Duke, who had no mind that prince should set out for his army, spoke first ; he represented, that it was more agreeable to the royal dignity, that his Majesty should not stir from the centre of his dominions, and backed his opinion with all the reasons wherewith his eloquence could inspire him. No sooner had he done speaking, but his advice

was

was seconded by all the council in general, except the Marquis de Grana; who hearkening only to his zeal for the house of Austria, and giving way to the sincerity of his nation, opposed the sentiments of the first minister; and maintained the contrary opinion, with so much resolution, that the King, struck with the solidity of his arguments, embraced his opinion, though contrary to all the voices in the council, and set the day for his departure for the army.

This was the first time in his whole life that this monarch had dared to think otherwise than his favourite; who looking upon that novelty as a deadly affront, was infinitely mortified thereat. Just as the minister was going to retire to his closet, there to vent his chagrin at liberty, he perceived me, called me, and making me go into the closet with him, related to me, with the air of one greatly disturbed, what had passed at the council; then, like a man that could not recover himself from his surprise; "Yes, Santillane," pursued he, "his Majesty, who, for above these twenty years, has only spoken by my mouth, and seen with my eyes, has preferred Grana's advice to mine: and in what manner too? why? in loading that ambassador with praises, and extolling his zeal for the house of Austria; as if that German could have more than me.

It is easy to judge hereby," added the minister, "that there is a party formed against me, and that the Queen is at the head of it." "Well, my Lord," said I; "and if it should
be

be so, why should that disquiet you? has not the Queen, for above these twelve years, been used to see you manage all affairs? and have not you accustomed the King not to consult her? As for the Marquis de Grana, his Majesty may perhaps have embraced his opinion through a desire of seeing his army, and making a campaign." "You are mistaken," cried the Count-Duke, interrupting me; "say rather, my enemies hope, that when the King is with his troops, he will be always surrounded with the grandees who will follow him; and that more than one of them will be sufficiently dissatisfied to venture to inveigh against my administration. But they are deceived," added he; "I shall know very well, during the journey, how to render his Majesty inaccessible to all the grandees;" which, in effect, he did, after a manner that very well deserves relating.

The day of the King's departure being come, that monarch, after intrusting the Queen with the care of the government in his absence, set out for Saragossa: but before he got thither, he passed by Aranjuez, which place he thought so delicious, that he staid there near three weeks. From Aranjuez the minister made him go to Cuenca, where he amused him, yet longer, by the diversions wherewith he entertained him. After this his Majesty spent likewise some time in hunting at Molina d'Arragon; which done, he was suffered to go on to Saragossa. His army was not far from thence, and he was preparing to view it; but the Count-Duke found the means

to

to change his mind, by making him believe, he would be in danger of being surpris'd by the French, who were masters of the plain of Moncon : infomuch that the King, terrified at a danger that was not in the least to be apprehended, resolv'd to remain shut up in his palace, as in a prison. In the mean while, the minister, taking advantage of his fear, and on pretence of being watchful for his safety, kept him, in a manner, always under his eye : infomuch that the grandees, who had put themselves to an excessive expence, that they might be in a condition to attend their sovereign, had not even the satisfaction of obtaining a private audience of him. At last, Philip, growing weary of having but a bad lodging at Saragossa, and of passing his time there yet worse, or, if you please, of being a prisoner, return'd soon to Madrid. Thus did that monarch end his campaign, leaving to the Marquis de los Velez, general of his troops, the care of maintaining the honour of Spain.

C H A P. IX.

Of the revolution of Portugal, and the disgrace of the Count-Duke.

W^Ithin a few days after the King's return, the people of Madrid were alarmed with very disagreeable news. They heard that the Portuguese, looking upon the revolt of the Catalans as a favourable opportunity of shaking off the Spanish yoke, had taken up arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza King : that they were fully resolv'd to maintain

maintain him upon the throne, and depended upon being able to go through with their resolution ; Spain being then surrounded with enemies on all sides, in Germany, in Italy, in Flanders, and Catalonia. In effect, they could not have pitched upon a more critical juncture, to free themselves from a power they abhorred.

What is very singular, is, that at the very time when the court and the city were under the greatest consternation at this news, the Count-Duke would have jested upon it with the King, at the expence of the Duke of Braganza : but Philip, far from seeming pleased with his scurvy jests, put on a grave air, which wholly confounded him, and gave him a fore-sight of his disgrace. The minister no longer doubted of it, when he heard the Queen had declared openly against him, and accused him boldly of having caused the revolt of the Portuguese by his misadministration. Most of the grandees, and especially those who had been at Saragossa, no sooner perceived a storm was gathering over the Count-Duke's head, but they joined the Queen : and what entirely finished his disgrace, was, that the Duchess-dowager of Mantua, heretofore Vice-queen of Portugal, returned from Lisbon to Madrid, and let the King plainly see, the revolution of that kingdom was wholly owing to the fault of his first minister.

The allegations of this princess made all the impression that was possible upon that monarch's mind ; insomuch, that recovering entirely from his prepossession in favour of the Count-Duke,

Count-Duke, he immediately cast off all the affection he once had for him. When that minister was informed that his Majesty gave ear to his enemies, he wrote to him, to ask leave to resign his employment, and remove from court; since they did him the injustice to impute to him all the misfortunes that had befallen the kingdom, in the course of his ministry. He imagined this would produce a good effect, and that his Majesty still had so much value for him, as not to consent to his retiring: but all the answer the king made him, was, That he gave him free liberty to go whither he pleased.

This short reply, written with his Majesty's own hand, was like a thunder-clap to his Excellency, who did not in the least expect it. Nevertheless, though it greatly shocked him, he affected an air of constancy, and asked me what I would do in his place. "I should easily come to a resolution," said I; "for I would leave the court, and retire to one of my estates, there to spend the rest of my days in tranquillity." "Your advice is good," answered my master; "accordingly I intend to finish my course at Loeches, after having had one audience of the King. I should be glad to shew him, I have done humanely all that was possible, to support well the heavy burthen that lay upon me; and that it was not in my power to prevent the unfortunate accidents for which I am blamed; being no more guilty of any fault therein, than an able pilot, who, in spite of all his skill, sees his vessel born away by the winds and waves." The minister

still flattered himself, that, by speaking to his Majesty, he might again set matters right, and recover his lost ground : but he could not get audience ; and, what was more, the key was demanded, by which he entered when he pleased into his Majesty's apartment.

Judging, then, there was no farther hopes for him, he resolved in good earnest upon retiring. To this end, he looked over his papers, great part of which he prudently burnt ; he then named what officers of his household and footmen he would have with him, and gave orders for his departure the next morning. As he was apprehensive of being insulted by the populace in going out of the palace, he stole out very early in the morning, by the kitchen-door ; got into a sorry coach with his confessor and me, and took, without meeting with any affront, the road to Loeches, a village of which he was lord, and where the Countess his lady had built a magnificent convent of Dominican nuns : we got thither in less than four hours ; all his retinue arrived there soon after.

C H A P. X.

Of the trouble and disquiet that at first disturbed the Count-Duke, and the happy tranquillity that followed it : how that minister employed himself in his retirement.

THE Countess d'Olivarez let her husband retire to Loeches, and staid behind some days at court, with design to try, whether, by her prayers and tears, she could not get

get him recalled. But in vain did she prostrate herself before their Majesties; the King had no regard to her remonstrances, though artfully drawn up; and the Queen, who hated her mortally, beheld her tears with pleasure. The Countess, however, was not disheartened, but humbled herself so far, as to implore the good offices of the Queen's ladies of the bed-chamber; but all she got by her cringing, was to see she excited their scorn rather than their pity. Disconsolate with having in vain taken so many mortifying steps, she came to rejoin her husband, and lament with him the loss of a place, which, under such a reign as that of Philip. IV. was perhaps the first in the kingdom.

The account that lady gave of the state of Madrid at her leaving it, redoubled the affliction of the Count-Duke: "Your enemies," said she, weeping, "the Duke de Medina Cœli, and other grandees who hate you, are continually extolling the King for having removed you from the ministry; and the people celebrate your disgrace with an insolent joy, as if the end of your administration would put a period to all the misfortunes of the state." "Madam," answered my master, "follow my example; smother your vexation; we must give way to the storm we cannot prevent. I fancied, it is true, I could maintain myself in favour to the end of my life: an illusion common to first ministers and favourites; who forget their fortune depends upon their sovereign's pleasure. Was not the Duke of Lerma mistaken therein as well as me? al-

though he imagined the purple wherewith he was invested, was a sure pledge of his authority's being established for life?"

In this manner did the Count-Duke exhort his lady to patience; whilst he was himself in an agitation, that was renewed every day, by the dispatches he received from Don Henry; who had continued at court to observe what passed there, and took care to give him exact intelligence. It was Scipio who brought this young nobleman's letters; for he was still with him, though I no longer lived there since his marriage with Donna Juanna. The dispatches of this adopted son were always full of ill news, and unfortunately they expected nothing else from him. Sometimes he sent word, that the grandees, not content with rejoicing publicly at the Count-Duke's removal, joined their whole interest to get all his creatures turned out of their posts and employments, and have them filled up by his enemies. At other times he informed us, that Don Lewis de Haro began to come into favour, and that, according to all appearances, he was in a fair way of becoming first minister. But of all the afflicting news my master heard, what seemed to sting him most, was the change that was made in the viceroyalty of Naples; which the court, only to mortify him, took from the Duke de Medina de las Torres, whom he loved, to give it to the Almirante of Castile, whom he had always hated.

For three months, it may be truly said, my Lord was overwhelmed with trouble and chagrin, in his retirement; but his confessor, a Dominican.

Dominican friar, who, with a solid piety, was master of a masculine eloquence, at last found the way to comfort him. By often representing to him emphatically, that he ought only to think of his salvation; he had, with the help of grace, the good fortune to wear his mind from the court. His Excellency would no longer hear any news from Madrid; neither had he any other care, than how to dispose himself for dying well. The Countess d'Olivarez likewise making a good use of her solitary life, found, in the convent she had built, a consolation prepared for her by Providence: there were among the nuns some holy virgins, whose conversation, full of grace, turned insensibly into pleasure the bitterness of her days. In proportion as my master took off his thoughts from worldly affairs, he became more composed: and this was the way of his spending his time. He passed almost the whole morning in hearing masses in the Dominican church; then he went to dinner; after which he amused himself for two hours, in playing with me and some of his most favourite servants, at all sorts of games: then he usually retired alone into his closet, where he staid till sun-set; which done, he took a walk in his garden, or else would go out in his coach, and view the country round about his seat, attended sometimes by his confessor, and sometimes by me.

One day when I was alone with him, and admired the serenity that reigned in his countenance, I took the liberty to tell him: "My Lord, suffer me to express my joy; by an air

of satisfaction that appears in your looks, I judge your Excellency begins to be inured to solitude." "I am already quite inured to it," answered he; "and notwithstanding my being long accustomed to business, I protest to you, my boy, I delight more and more, every day, in the quiet and peaceable life I lead here."

C H A P. XI.

The Count-Duke grows on a sudden melancholy and pensive; the surprising cause of his sadness; and the fatal consequences thereof.

MY Lord, to diversify his employments, amused himself likewise sometimes in cultivating his garden. One day when I was looking on him, whilst he was working therein, he said to me, in jest, "You see, Santilane, a minister banished from court, become a gardener at Loeches." "My Lord," replied I, in the same tone, "I fancy I see Dionysius of Syracuse turned schoolmaster at Corinth." My master smiled at my answer, and was not displeased at the comparison.

We were all overjoyed in the family, to see our master, superior to this disgrace, find charms in a life so different from that he had always led; when we perceived, with sorrow, that he changed visibly. He grew dull and pensive, and fell into a profound melancholy: he ceased playing with us, and no longer seemed sensible of any thing we could invent to divert him: he would lock himself up after dinner in his closet, where he would remain all alone till night. We imagined his sadness

was caused by the remembrance of his past greatness ; and in this opinion we set the Dominican friar upon him, whose eloquence, nevertheless, could not get the better of my master's melancholy, which, instead of abating, seemed to increase hourly.

At last, it came into my head, that the minister's trouble might proceed from some particular cause, which he would not tell ; this made me form the design of getting his secret out of him. In order to effect this, I watched an opportunity of speaking to him without witnesses ; and having found it, " My Lord," said I, with an air of respect and affection, " may Gil Bias presume to ask his master one question ?" " Speak," answered he, " you have free liberty." " What is become," resumed I, " of that serenity that used to reign in your Excellency's looks ? Have you no longer the ascendant you had once got over your fortune ? Does your lost favour excite new regret in you ? Are you again plunged in that abyfs of chagrin, from whence your virtue extricated you ?" " No, thank heaven," answered the minister, " my mind is no longer taken up with the thoughts of the part I acted at court ; and I have for ever forgot the honours that were there shewn me." " If then," replied I, " you have the resolution no longer to call it to remembrance, why have you the weakness to give yourself up to a melancholy that alarms us all ? What ails you, my dear master ?" pursued I, throwing myself at his feet : " you have certainly some secret chagrin, which
preys

preys upon you : can you make a secret of it to Santillane, with whose discretion, zeal, and fidelity, you are so well acquainted ? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence ?”

“ You possess it still,” said my Lord ; “ but I must own to you it goes against me to reveal, even to you, what is the cause of the melancholy wherein you now see me buried : nevertheless, I cannot hold out against the entreaties of such a servant and friend as you. Hear then what is the occasion of my present trouble ; it is only to Santillane that I can resolve to intrust a secret of this nature. Yes,” continued he, “ I am a prey to a gloomy melancholy, which shortens my days insensibly : I see before me every moment a spectre, that appears to me under a most ghastly form : in vain do I tell myself that it is but an illusion ; a phantom that has no reality in it ; its continual appearance offends my sight, and disturbs my mind. If I have resolution enough to be convinced that in seeing this apparition I see nothing, I am still weak enough to be afflicted at this vision. This is what you have forced me to tell you ;” added he, “ judge now whether I am in the wrong to conceal from all the world the cause of my melancholy.”

I heard, with as much sorrow as surprise, so extraordinary an account, which argued a disorder in the *pericranium*. “ My Lord,” said I to the minister, “ does not this proceed from your taking too little sustenance ? for you are temperate to an excess !” “ That is what I thought at first,” answered he ; “ and
to

to try whether it was owing to my diet, I have eaten more than usual for some days past, but all to no purpose, the phantom does not disappear." "It shall disappear," replied I, to comfort him; "and if your Excellency would amuse yourself a little by playing with your faithful servants, I believe you will not be long before you will be delivered from those gloomy vapours."

A little after this conversation, my Lord fell sick; and finding it would be a serious affair, sent to Madrid for two notaries to draw his will. He sent also for three famous physicians, who had the reputation of *sometimes* curing their patients. As soon as the news of the arrival of the latter was known in the house, nothing was heard there but mourning and lamentations; the death of our master was looked upon as almost inevitable, so much were they prejudiced against those gentlemen. They had brought with them an apothecary and a chirurgeon, the ordinary executioners of their prescriptions: they suffered the notaries first to dispatch their business, after which they prepared themselves likewise to dispatch theirs. As they were of the same principles with Dr. Sangrado, at the very first consultation they ordered copious and frequent bleeding: insomuch that, at the end of six days, they reduced the Count-Duke to extremity, and on the seventh delivered him from his apparition.

After the death of this minister, a lively and sincere grief reigned throughout the castle of Loeches: all his domestics bitterly lamented

mented his loss : far from comforting themselves with the certainty of being included in his will, there was not one who would not willingly have renounced his legacy, to have restored him to life. As for me, whom he had loved most, and who had devoted myself to him purely out of inclination to his person, I was yet more afflicted than the rest : I doubt whether even Antonia's death cost me more tears than the Count-Duke's.

C H A P. XII.

What passed at the castle of Loeches after the Count-Duke's death; and what course Santilane took.

THE minister, as he had ordered, was buried without pomp, or noise, in the convent of Dominican nuns, to the music of our lamentations. This done, the Countess d'Olivarez had the will read to us, with which all the domestics had reason to be satisfied. Every one had a legacy therein proportionable to his place, and the least was two thousand crowns. Mine was the most considerable of all ; my Lord left me ten thousand pistoles, to testify his singular affection for me. Neither did he forget the hospitals ; besides which, he founded annual masses to be said, for the repose of his soul, in several convents.

The Countess d'Olivarez sent all the domestics to Madrid, to receive their legacies from the steward Don Raymond Caporis, who had orders to pay them forthwith : but I could not set out with them ; a violent fever, the effect of my grief, detained me between

tween seven and eight days at the castle. During that time, the Dominican friar never forsook me : this good father had taken a liking to me, and interesting himself in my welfare, he asked me, when he saw me upon the mending hand, what I intended to do with myself ? “ I do not know, reverend father,” answered I, “ not being yet come to a resolution with myself upon that head : there are some moments, when I am tempted to shut myself up in a cell, and do penance.” “ Precious moments !” cried the Dominican ; “ Signior de Santillane, you would do well to take advantage thereof : I would advise you, as a friend, without ceasing for that to be a layman, to retire into our convent at Madrid, to become a benefactor to it by the gift of all your estate, and to die there under the habit of St. Dominic : there are many persons who atone for a wordly life by such an end.”

In the disposition of mind I was then in, the friar’s advice did not disgust me ; and I answered his Reverence, that I would consider of it : but, having consulted Scipio thereupon, whom I saw a moment afterwards, he inveighed against this design, which seemed to him the notion of a distempered head. “ Fie upon it, Signior de Santillane,” said he, “ can such a retirement please you ? Does not your seat at Lirias offer you a more agreeable solitude : if you was charmed with it formerly, you will relish the sweets of it yet better now, when you are of an age more proper to be affected with the beauties of nature.”

Coscolina’s son found it no difficulty to
bring

bring me over to his opinion : “ You have got the day, my boy,” said I, “ from the Dominican friar ; I see plainly, in effect, that I shall do better to return to my seat ; I will stick to that resolution. We will set out again for Lirias as soon as I am able to bear travelling ; which happened very soon : for, no longer having a fever, I found myself strong enough, in a little while, to put this design in execution. We went then to Madrid, Scipio and I ; but the sight of that city no longer gave me the same pleasure as formerly. As I knew almost all the inhabitants abhorred the memory of a minister, of whom I retained the most tender remembrance, I could not look upon it with a good eye : accordingly, I staid there but five or six days, which Scipio employed in making preparations for our departure to Lirias. Whilst he was minding our equipage, I went to Caporis, who gave me my legacy in doubloons : I saw also the receivers of the commanderies, upon which I had pensions, and took order with them for the payment thereof. In a word, I settled all my affairs.

The evening before my departure, I asked Coscolina’s son, if he had taken leave of Don Henry ? “ Yes,” answered he, “ we parted this morning good friends ; he told me, however, he was sorry I would leave him ; but though he was satisfied with me, I was not so with him. It is not enough for the valet to please the master, the master must likewise be agreeable to the valet, otherwise they will live but indifferently together. Besides,” continued

continued he, "Don Henry makes now but a wretched figure at court; they point at him in the streets, and no longer call him any thing, but *the son of the Genoese*; judge whether it is agreeable to a lad of honour to serve a man that is disgraced."

We set out at last from Madrid, one fine morning at sun-rise, and took the road to Cuenca; observe in what order, and with what equipage. My confidant and I were in a chaise, drawn by two mules, and driven by a postilion; three he-mules laden with our clothes and money, and led by two grooms, followed immediately after; then came two stout footmen, chosen by Scipio, mounted likewise upon two mules, and armed up to the very teeth: the grooms likewise had daggers by their sides, and the postilion had a pair of good pistols at the pommel of his saddle. As we were seven men, six of whom were very resolute, I set out gaily on my journey, without being in any apprehension for my legacy. In the villages through which we passed, our he-mules proudly rung their bells; at the sound of which, the peasants ran out to their doors, to see our equipage go by, which seemed to them at least that of a grandee, who was going to take possession of a vice-royalty.

C H A P. XIII.

Gil Blas returns to his estate ; his joy to find Seraphina his god-daughter marriageable, and with what lady he falls in love.

I Spent a fortnight in going to Lirias, nothing obliging me to travel by long journeys ; all I desired was to get there safely, and my desire was granted. The sight of my house inspired me at first with some melancholy thoughts, by bringing Antonia into my mind afresh : but I knew very soon how to put them out of my head, being resolved only to give way to such ideas as would please me ; besides that, two and twenty years, which had elapsed since her death, had very much weakened my passion for her.

As soon as I entered my house, Beatrice and her daughter came to salute me, with an air full of zeal and affection ; after which the father, mother, and daughter, flew into each other's arms, with transports of joy that charmed me. After so many embraces, I said, looking on my god-daughter very attentively, " Is it possible, this should be the little Seraphina, whom I left in the cradle, when I set out from Lirias ? I am overjoyed to see her so well grown, and so pretty ; we must think of getting her a husband." " How ! my dear godfather," cried my god-child, blushing a little at my last words, " you have been with me but a moment, and are you studying already how to get rid of me ?" " No, child,"

child," answered I, " we do not design to lose you by marrying you ; we would have a husband who should enjoy you, without taking you away from your parents, and should live in a manner with us."

" Just such a one now offers," said Beatrice, then interposing ; " a gentleman of this country has seen Seraphina, in the chapel belonging to this hamlet, and has fallen in love with her. He has been to see me, has declared his passion, and asked my consent. Should you have it," said I, " you would be never the better for it ; Seraphina depends upon her father and godfather, who alone have the power of disposing of her : all I can do, is, to write them word of your addresses, which are an honour to my daughter. In effect, Gentlemen," pursued she, " it is what I was just going to do ; but you are now returned, and may act as you think proper."

" But what character has this Hidalgo ?" said Scipio. " Is not he like most of his rank ? Is not he proud of his gentility, and insolent to those who are but plebeians ?"

" Oh, for that matter, not in the least," answered Beatrice ; " he is a young man, perfectly good-natured, and well-bred ; besides which, he has a good mien, and is not yet thirty years old." " You give us," said I to Beatrice, " a good agreeable description of this cavalier ; what is his name ?" " *Don Juan de Futella*," answered Scipio's wife : " It is not long since he came to his estate, by the death of his father ; and he lives at his seat,

about a league from hence, with a sister, younger than himself, who is under his care." "I have formerly heard talk of this gentleman's family," replied I; "it is one of the best in the kingdom of Valencia." "I value gentility less," cried Scipio, "than the accomplishments of the mind and understanding; and this Don Juan will suit us, if he is an honest man." "He has that character," said Seraphina, joining then in the discourse; "the people of Lirias, who know him, speak all the good in the world of him." At these words of my god-daughter's, I looked upon her father with a smile; who, having taken notice of them as well as me, judged that this gallant was not disagreeable to his daughter.

This cavalier soon heard of our arrival at Lirias; for, two days after, we saw him at my seat. He accosted us with a good grace, and, far from contradicting, by his presence, what Beatrice had said of him, he imprinted in us a great opinion of his merit. He told us, that, as a neighbour, he came to congratulate us on our safe return into the country: we received him as civilly as possible: but this visit was purely out of good manners, and passed away entirely in compliments on both sides: for Don Juan, without saying one word of Seraphina, took his leave; only desiring, we would allow him to come again to see us, and take advantage of a neighbourhood, which he foresaw would be very agreeable to him. When he was gone, Beatrice asked us, what we thought of the gentleman? We answered, that

that he had preposseſſed us in his favour, and we believed fortune could not offer us a better match for Seraphina.

The very next day I went after dinner with Coscolina's ſon, to return the viſit we owed Don Juan : we ſet out for his ſeat, conducted by a guide, who, after three quarters of an hour's riding, ſaid, " 'There is Signior Don Juan de Jutella's ſeat." In vain did we look with all our eyes around the country. We were a long time before we could perceive it ; neither did we diſcover it, till we were juſt upon it ; for it was ſituate at the foot of a hill, and in the miſt a wood, whoſe lofty trees hid it from our ſight. It had an air of antiquity, and was very much out of repair, which was a greater ſign of the ancientneſs of the owner's family, than of his riches. Nevertheleſs, when we entered the houſe, we found the decay of the building made amends for by the genteelneſs of the furniture.

Don Juan received us in a parlour handſomely ſet off ; where he preſented us his ſiſter Dorothea, a young lady who ſeemed between nineteen and twenty years of age. She was dreſſed out to the beſt advantage, like a perſon, who, having expected our viſit, had a mind not to be thought diſagreeable by us ; and appearing before me with all her charms, ſhe made the ſame impreſſion on me as Antonia ; for the ſight of her put me into ſome diſorder ; but I concealed it ſo well, that even Scipio himſelf did not take any notice of it. Our converſation turned, as it did the day before,

fore, upon the mutual pleasure we should take in visiting each other sometimes, and living together like good neighbours. He never as yet mentioned Seraphina; neither did we say any thing that might induce him to declare his love, being willing to let him come to that point of his own accord. During our discourse, I often stole a glance at Dorothea, although I affected to look at her as seldom as possible; and every time my eyes met hers, they pierced my heart with so many fresh wounds. I must confess, however, to do justice to the beloved object, that she was not a perfect beauty: if her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, and her lips surpassed the coral in redness, her nose was a little too long, and her eyes too small: nevertheless, altogether she charmed me to a great degree.

In a word, I did not go from Jutella's as I came thither; but returning to Lirias with my head full of Dorothea, my thoughts ran all upon her, and I talked of nothing else. "How! my dear master," said Scipio, looking on me with surprise, "you are mightily taken up with Don Juan's sister! Is it possible she can have inspired you with love?" "Yes, friend," answered I, "and I blush for shame at it. O Heavens! I, who, since Antonia's death, have seen a thousand beauties with indifference, must I meet one to charm me at my age, without being able to make any resistance?" "Well, Sir," resumed Cololina's son, "you ought to be pleased with the adventure, instead of complaining of it; you

you are still of an age wherein it is not at all ridiculous to be susceptible of love ; and time has not yet so much wrinkled your forehead to take from you all hopes of pleasing : be advised by me, when next you see Don Juan, ask him boldly for his sister ; he cannot refuse her to such a man as you ; and besides, if you must absolutely be a gentleman to marry Dorothea, are not you so ? You have got a patent that ennobles you, which is sufficient for your posterity ; when time shall have spread over that patent the thick veil with which she covers the origin of all families after four or five generations, the descendants of Santillane will be reckoned amongst the most illustrious."

C H A P. XIV.

Of the double marriage that was agreed on at Lirias, which at last concludes the history of Gil Blas de Santillane.

BY this discourse Scipio encouraged me to declare myself Dorothea's lover, without considering he exposed me to the hazard of a refusal : I did not resolve upon it, however, without some dread. Though I did not seem so old as I really was, and might have pretended to have been at least ten years less, I could not help believing it reasonable to doubt of my being able to please a young beauty. I determined nevertheless to run the venture of asking her, as soon as I should see her brother ; who, on the other hand, not being

ing sure of obtaining my god-daughter, was not without uneasiness.

He returned to my house next morning, just as I had done dressing : “ Signior de Santillane,” said he, “ I am come now to Lirias to talk with you about an affair of importance.” Hereupon I took him into my closet, where coming immediately to the point : “ I believe,” pursued he, “ you are not ignorant of the motive that brings me : I love Seraphina ; you have an absolute power over her father ; I beg you would speak to him in my behalf, and help me to obtain the object of my love : let me be indebted to you for the future happiness of my life.” “ Signior Don Juan,” answered I, “ as you proceed directly to the matter in hand, you will not take it amiss if I follow your example ; wherefore, after promising you my offices with the father of my god-daughter, I desire yours in my behalf with your sister.”

At these last words, Don Juan discovered an agreeable surprise, from whence I drew a favourable omen. “ Is it possible,” cried he afterwards, “ that Dorothea should yesterday make a conquest of your heart ?” “ She has indeed charmed me,” answered I ; “ and I should think myself the happiest of mankind, if my addresses should be acceptable to you both.” You may depend upon it,” replied he, “ as ancient as our family is, we shall not disdain your alliance.” “ I am very glad,” resumed I, “ you make no difficulty of receiving a plebeian as your brother-in-law ; I esteem

steem you the more for it ; you shew therein your good sense : but had you been vain enough to have resolved not to have granted your sister but to a gentleman, know that I had wherewithal to have satisfied your vanity. I have been employed twenty years in the prime minister's office ; and the King, in return for the services I have done the state, has thought proper to reward me with a patent to ennoble me, which you shall see this moment." Having thus said, I took it out of a drawer where I always concealed it, and gave it to Don Juan, who read it attentively from one end to the other, with an extreme satisfaction." " It is sufficient," said he, returning it to me, " Dorothea is yours : " " And you," answered I, " may depend upon having Seraphina."

These two matches were then resolved on thus between us. All that now remained was to know whether our future spouses would consent willingly ; for Don Juan and myself being equally delicate upon that head, did not mean to have them against their wills. That gentleman, therefore, returned to his own seat, in order to propose me to his sister ; and I had a conference with Scipio, Beatrice, and my god-daughter, to inform them of the discourse I had just had with that cavalier. Beatrice was for accepting of him without hesitation, and Seraphina shewed by her silence that she was not of a contrary opinion : neither did the father indeed differ much from them upon that head ; but seemed a little uneasy

easy about what fortune he should give to a gentleman, whose house stood so greatly in need of immediate repairing. I stopped his mouth, however, by telling him that was my province; and that I would make my god-daughter a present of four thousand pistoles for her portion.

I saw Don Juan again that very evening: "Your affairs," said I, "go on to a miracle; I wish mine were but in as fair a way." "They are likewise in the best way in the world," answered he; "I had no need to have recourse to my authority to obtain Dorothea's consent; your person is agreeable to her, and she likes your behaviour: you was apprehensive of not being to her fancy, and she is afraid, with more reason, that having nothing to offer you but her heart, and her hand"—"What can I desire more?" cried I, interrupting him, quite transported with joy. "Since the lovely Dorothea is not averse to uniting her fate with mine, I require no more: I am rich enough to marry her without any fortune, and her possession alone will crown all my wishes."

Don Juan and I, very well satisfied with having brought things prosperously thus far, resolved, in order to hasten our nuptials, to pass over all superfluous ceremonies. To this end, I procured him an interview with the parents of Seraphina; and after they had agreed upon the conditions of their marriage, he took his leave of us, with a promise of returning next morning with Dorothea. Upon this,

this, my desire of seeming agreeable in that lady's eyes, made me spend three good hours in dressing, to appear like another Adonis; yet could not, with all my care, please myself. Dressing is but a diversion to a young man, who expects to see his mistress, but to one who begins to advance in years it is a perfect study. Nevertheless, I was more fortunate than I deserved; I saw again Don Juan's sister, and was received so favourably by her, that I imagined myself to be still good for something. I had a pretty long discourse with her, and was very much pleased with her temper and understanding; by which I judged, that by a good behaviour, and being very complaisant, I might become a beloved husband. Full of so agreeable a hope, I sent to Valencia for two lawyers, who drew up the marriage-articles; after which we had recourse to the curate of Paterna, who came to Lirias, and married Don Juan and me to our mistresses.

Thus did I light then, for the second time, the hymeneal torch; neither had I any reason to repent of it. Dorothea, like a virtuous woman, took a pleasure in her duty; and being sensibly affected with my care to prevent her in all her wishes, grew soon as fond of me, as if I had been young. On the other hand, Don Juan and my god-daughter burnt with a mutual ardour; and, what is pretty uncommon, the two sisters-in-law conceived for each other a most lively and sincere friendship. For my part, I found in my brother-in-law

law so many good qualities, as created in me a real affection for him, which he did not repay with ingratitude. In short, we lived with so much union, that at night when we were to part, though to meet again next day, the parting was not without some pain. For this reason, we resolved to make but one family of the two; which should be sometimes at our seat at Lirias, and sometimes at Jutella's, which for that reason was put in extraordinary repair, out of his Excellency's pistoles.

Three years are already elapsed, courteous reader, since I have led a delicious life with persons so dear to me: to crown my satisfaction, heaven has vouchsafed to grant me two children, whose education will probably be the amusement of my old age, and of whom I sincerely believe myself the father.

23 OCT 62

F I N I S.